THE AMERICAN ASTOR-FAMILY

Bicentennial Edition Astoria, Oregon 1811-2011

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Deutsch-Amerikanischer Freundeskreis Walldorf
(German-American Sister City Committee)

FREE

John Jacob Astor (1763-1848) by Gilbert Stuart

PREFACE

"The first $100,000, that was hard to get, but afterward it was easy to make more" [1]

"Buy and hold. Let others improve"

"Buy the acre; sell the lot"

"To give something for nothing is to weaken the giver" [2]

These are only a few quotes by John Jacob Astor, the poor boy who left his family and home in Walldorf in 1779 at age 16 and died 69 years later at age 84 in New York City – with a fortune of 20 million dollars the richest American and one of the most famous men worldwide. John Jacob Astor was always the right man at the right place at the right time. He knew when to start an adventure – he knew when to profit the most of it – and he knew when to get out of the business.

Long before Cornelius Vanderbilt, George Jay Gould, John Davidson Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie or Henry Ford was John Jacob Astor the first Capitalist in America. No name is closer connected to the American fur-trade; his name became in the history of the United States a synonym for wealth beyond any imagination. "*The Man who bought Manhattan*" became the "*original American tycoon*". Astor was undoubted an unusual man with unusual qualities. Well known were his diligence, his persistence and his frugality – but also his inconsideration and recklessness.

Although much has been written about Astor – only little is known of him personally. The same goes for his eldest son John Jacob II and his heir William Backhouse Sr. More information is available for the third generation with John Jacob III and William Backhouse Jr. and his wife Caroline ("*the* Mrs Astor") and the fourth generation with John Jacob IV and William Waldorf, who in 1890 settled in England. While the English Astors are still prominent in British society and politics, the American Astors have left the scene of public attention with the fifth Generation, with Vincent and his wife Brooke (who died in 2007) and John Jacob VI (†1992).
This brochure gives short information from different sources for the most important members of the American branch of the Astor-Family and will assist as basis for further research. It is part of a series of different publications by the German-American Sister City Committee in Walldorf for the Bicentennial of Astoria/Oregon 1811-2011. **Herbert C. Ebeling**

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[1] John Gates: The Astor Family (1981) p. 10.
[2] Lucy Kavaler: The Astors (1966) pp. 27, 25 and 22.

These four houses are left of a colonade of nine and were originally named La Grange Terrace after the country seat of the Marquis de Lafayette. Constructed in 1831, they were considered the finest row of private dwellings in the city of New York. The building 432 Lafayette Street is the only still existing in New York, where John Jacob Astor actually lived with his wife Sarah– his longtime guest was Washington Irving

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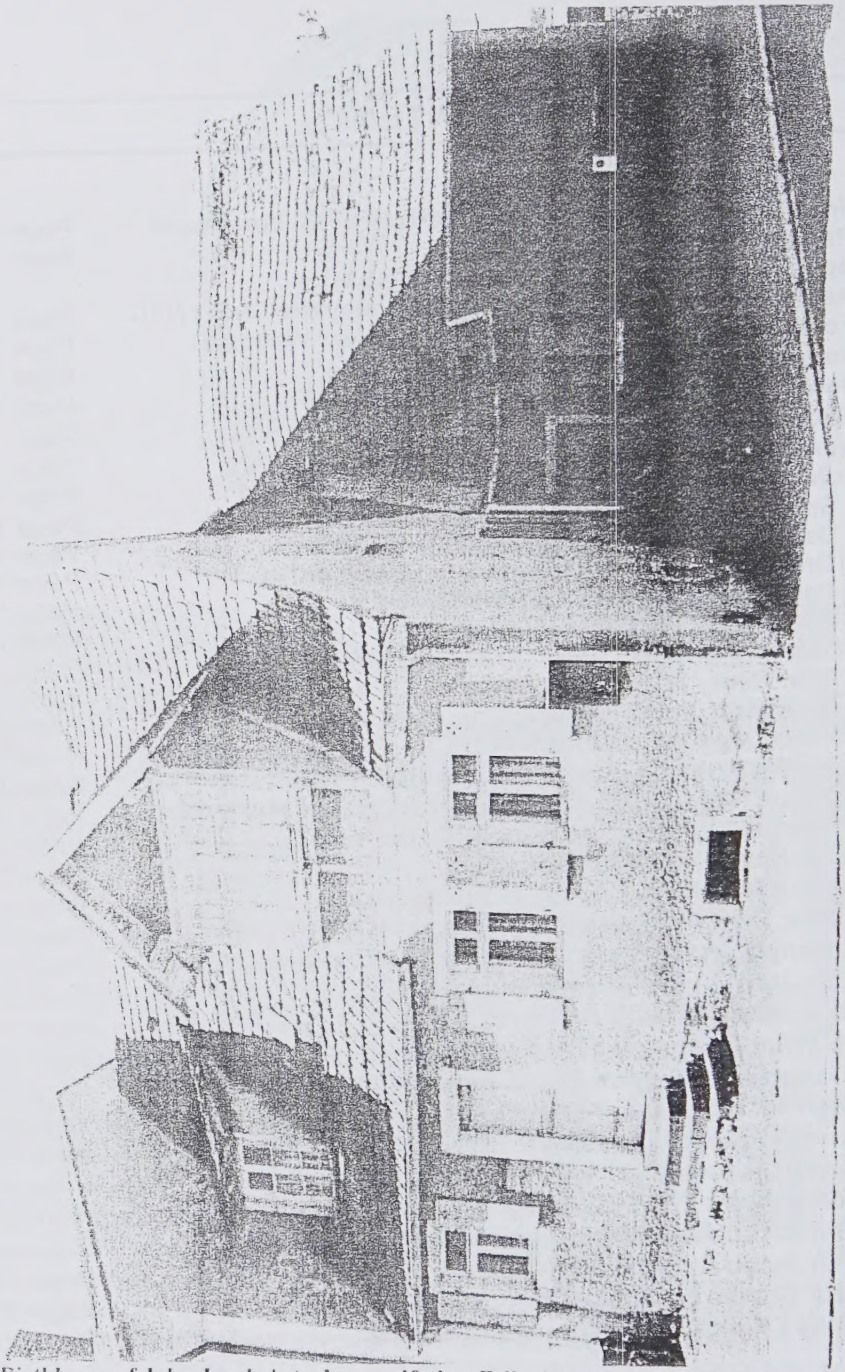

Birthhome of John Jacob Astor's grandfather Felix Astor (9 Nov. 1693 in Nussloch - 16 Aug. 1765 in Walldorf). The building in neighboring Nussloch is still standing

JOHANN JACOB ASTOR (1724-1816)

Born: 7 July 1724 in Walldorf, Palatinate, Germany (Reformed, butcher)
Died: 18 April 1816 in Walldorf
Spouses:

1. **Maria Magdalena vom Berg** (*20 July 1730 in Ittlingen, †1 May 1764 in Walldorf) Lutheran, married 14 Apr 1749 in Walldorf Reformed Church
   Children (all baptized and cofirmed in the Reformed Church):
   1. **Peter** (*4 March 1750, †15 Feb 1752)
   2. **Georg Peter** (*28 Apr 1752, †Dez 1813) went to London
   3. **Johann Heinrich** (*9 Jan 1754, †1833 in NYC) went to NYC
   4. **Catharina** (*21 Apr 1757) married Ehinger in NCY
   5. **Johann Melchior** (*31 Oct 1759) went to Neuwied (Germany)
   6. **Johann Jacob** (*17 July 1763, †29 Mar 1848 in NYC)
2. **Christina Barbara Seibold** (*20 Feb 1742 in Wiesloch, †15 Nov 1809 in Walldorf) Lutheran, married 8 July 1766 in Walldorf Reformed Church
   Children (all baptized and cofirmed in the Reformed Church):
   7. **Maria Magdalena** (*27 Apr 1767, †4 May 1768)
   8. **Maria Magdalena** ((*12 Sep 1768)
   9. **Anna Eva** (*29 Jan 1770, †1859 in NCY)
   10. **Elisabetha** (*30 Sep 1773, †1832 in NCY)
   11. **Sebastian** (*8 Nov 1775) moved away from Walldorf
   12. **Maria Barbara** (*3 Sep 1778, †31 Jan 1780)

Parents:
Felix Astor (*9 Nov 1693 in Nussloch, †10 Aug 1765 in Walldorf) Innkeeper of the "Lamm" 17716-1724 and the "Löwen" 1727-1724, butcher 1747/48, Churchwarden 1744-46 (Son of Johann Jacob and Anna Margaretha Astor)
Eva Dorothea Kreh, Reformed (*26 May 1686 in Walldorf, †21 Feb 1725 in Walldorf) married 27 June 1713 in Walldorf Reformed Church (5 children – fifth child = Johann Jacob 1724-1816)
Eva Dorothea Kreh was the daughter of Johann Hieronymus Krähe (1647-1705), innkeeper 1679/81, customscollector 1669-72, churchwarden 1685 and Schultheiß (mayor) 1682-1705; and the widow of Johann Martin Freund (1658-1713), innkeeper 1700, custumscollector 1713, village-councillor 1702-13, churchwafrden 1701-05
Felix Astor's 2nd wife: **Susanna Renkert**, Reformed (*ca 1706 in Schwetzingen, †6 Apr 1767 in Walldorf) married 8 May 1725 in Schwetzingen Reformed Church (16 children)

John Jacob Astor's birthhome in Walldorf (torn down in 1904)

GEORGE ASTOR (1752-1813)

Birthname: **Georg Peter Astor**
Born: 28 Apr 1752 in Walldorf, Palatinate, Germany
Died: Dec 1813
Spouse: **Elizabeth** - married 9 Nov 1779
Children: **Joseph Astor**
George Astor
William Henry Astor, musician (†14 Apr 1849 in NYC)
Interred in the Astor-Family vault - Trinity Church Cemetery
Parents: **Johann Jakob Astor** (*7 July 1724 in Walldorf, †18 Apr 1816 in Walldorf)
Maria Magdalea vom Berg (*20 July 1730 Ittlingen, †1 May 1764 Walldorf)
Relatives: **John Jacob Astor** (*17 July 1763 in Walldorf, †29 Mar 1848 yin NYC) brother
Johann Heinrich (Henry) Astor (*9 Jan 1754 in Walldorf, †1833 In NYC) brother

George Astor migrated to London, where an uncle got him work with the piano manufacturer, Astor & Broadwood.[1]
George Astor: music seller and musical instrument maker, 26, Wych Street c1793-98; 27, Tottenham Street, Fitzroy Square c1798-1814; 79, Cornhill c1798-1835P; organ manufactory, Sun Street, Bishopsgate Street c1807-11. Trading: as George Astor c1793-98; as Astor and Co. 1798K-1814; as Astor and Horwood c1814-21; as C. Gerock, Astor and Co. c1821-28; as Christopher Gerock and Co. 1829P-1835P+. Humphries and Smith.

Piano: Astor

ASTOR London, England, About 1830
ASTOR Same as Kohler and Campbell and Bacon Piano Co., New York, Established in 1789.
ASTOR & CO. 79 Cornhill, London, England
ASTOR, GEORGE was the brother of John Jacob Astor who made pianos in London but did not come to America as his brother did.
ASTOR & HORWOOD previously known (1815) as George Astor 79 Cornhill, London
ASTOR JOHN JACOB - Exported pianos from Europe to America about 1789.
ASTOR PIANO CO. 601 West 50th Street, New York, about 1828
ASTOR WM. HENRY London, around 1810
The Astor Name is now used on some pianos made by Young Chang.

HENRY ASTOR (1754-1833)

Birthname: **Johann Heinrich Astor**
Born: 9 Jan 1754 in Walldorf, Palatinate, Germany
Died: 1833 in NYC
Spouse: **Dorothea Pessinger** (daughter of John Pessinger, butcher with shop in Fly Market)
Children: Adopted daughter
Parents: **Johann Jakob Astor** (*7 July 1724 in Walldorf, †18 Apr 1816 in Walldorf)
Maria Magdalea vom Berg (*20 July 1730 Ittlingen, †1 May 1764 Walldorf)
Relatives: **John Jacob Astor** (*17 July 1763 in Walldorf, †29 Mar 1848 in NYC) brother
George (Georg Peter) Astor (*28 Apr 1752 in Walldorf, †1813 In London) brother

Henry Astor was a butcher after 1776 in NCY victualling the Hessian troops brought to fight the American revolutionaires. Henry's primary venture was a butcher shop on the Bowery (in 1776) in Manhattan, from which, along with other investments, he was able to establish sizeable wealth. Astor died in 1833 and gave his fortune of at least 1 million dollar to his nephew William Backhouse Astor, Sr..

JOHN JACOB ASTOR I (1763-1848)

"If I could live all over again, I would buy
every square inch of Manhattan."

"You should buy Manhatten,
they aren't making anymore of it"

"If you want something done, hire someone –
if you want something done right, do it yourself"

- John Jacob Astor

John Jacob Astor was the first worldwide prominent member of the Astor family and the first multi-millionaire of the United States. Astor was the creator of the first trust in America, from which he made his fortune in fur trading, real estate, and opium.[1]

John Jacob Astor was always "the right man at the right time in the right place." He was a very ambitious and shrewd businessman amassing a fortune in kless than ten years. In 1808 he organized the American Fur Company in response to British Fur trading dominance in Canada. When he retired and sold his fur-trading business in 1834, he spent his time and money to improve the lives of others. Astor left an endowment of $400,000 to New York City for a public library, later known as the Astor Library. This library eventually became what is now the world-famous New York Public Library. He left 50.000 dollar to his hometown Walldorf for an orphanage and old-age home.

Born: Johann Jacob Astor on 17 July 1763 in Walldorf, Palatinate, Germany; since 1803 Duchy and since 1806 Grand Ducy of Baden.
Died: 29 March 1848 aged 84 in NYC (interred: Trinity Church Cemetery, Broadway/153rd Street, NYC)
Net Worth: About 20,000,000 dollar in 1848
Spouse: Married 19 Sep 1785 Sarah Todd (*1762, †1834) Daughter of Sarah Todd (Address: 81 Queens Street) of the Brevoort-Family
Children (see separate entries):

1. Magdalen (*1790, †1791)
2. Sarah (*1790, †1790, died in infancy)
3. John Jacob Astor II (*1791, †1879) [3]
4. William Backhouse Astor, Sr. (*1792, †1875)
5. Dorothee (*1795, †1853)

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[1] In 1816, John Jacob Astor of New York City joined the opium smuggling trade. His **American Fur Company** purchased ten tons of Turkish opium, then shipped the contraband item to Canton on the Packet Ship *Macedonian*. Astor would later leave the China opium trade and sell solely to England.[1]

6. Henry (*1797, †1799)
7. Eliza (*1801, †1838)
8. Jacob Warndorf[2] (*†1802) This death-born son is not known to be named (if named, than probably Jacob "Waldorf" and not "Warndorf")

Parents:
Johann Jakob Astor (*7 July 1724 in Walldorf, †18 Apr 1816 in Walldorf)
Maria Magdalea vom Berg (*20 July 1730 Ittlingen, †1 May 1764 Walldorf)

Brothers:
George (Georg Peter) Astor (*28 Apr 1752 in Walldorf, †18xx In London)
Johann Heinrich (Henry) Astor (*9 Jan 1754 in Walldorf, †1833 In NYC)

From humble origins in a small German village with 899 people in 1768, John Jacob Astor at age 16 emigrated to London in 1769, where he worked for his brother George in the business of manufacturing musical instruments and learned English. Following the American Revolutionary War, Astor arrived in 1783 in America, where he built a fur-trading empire, that extended to the Great Lakes region and Canada, and later expanded into the American West and Pacific coast. In the early 1800s he diversified into New York City real estate and later became a famed patron of the arts.

At the time of his death in 1848, Astor was the wealthiest person in the United States, leaving an estate estimated to be worth at least $20 million; according to the latest *Forbes* rankings, he would have had an estimated net worth of $110.1 billion in 2006 U.S. dollars, making him the fourth wealthiest person in American history.[3]

Early life: John Jacob Astor's ancestors were refugees from Northern Italy. He was born in 1763 to a poor working-class family in Walldorf as the youngest of six children by his father's first wife. Walldorf, near Heidelberg, was located in the old Palatinate, which became part of the Duchy in 1803 and of the Grand Duchy of Baden in 1803. Today, Walldorf is located in the Rhein-Neckar-Kreis (county). Astor's father Johann Jacob Astor was a butcher.

Astor arrived in the Baltimore in March 1784, went to New York City and started his fur-trading business. He traded furs with Indians and later opened a fur goods shop in New York City in the late 1780s. The fur trading business was very lucrative for Astor, he began trading internationally and quickly made a name for himself.

Astor met Sarah Todd and married her on September 19, 1785 and once said of her that she had the best business sense of anyone he knew. The couple had eight children, of which only three survived.

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[2] Name mentioned by New World Encyclopieda
[3] The All-Time Richest Americans - Forbes.com

In 1804, Astor purchased from Aaron Burr what remained of a 99-year lease on property in Manhattan. At the time, Burr was serving as vice president under Thomas Jefferson and desperately needed the purchase price of $62,500. The lease was to run until 1866. Astor began subdividing the land into nearly 250 lots and subleased them. His conditions were that the tenant could do whatever they wish with the lots for twenty-one years, after which they must renew the lease or Astor would take back the lot.

Fur Trade: Astor took advantage of the Jay Treaty between Great Britain and the United States in 1794, which opened new markets in Canada and the Great Lakes region. By 1800, he had amassed almost a quarter of a million dollars, and had become one of the leading figures in the fur trade. In 1800, following the example of the "Empress of China," the first American trading vessel to China, Astor traded furs, teas, and sandalwood with Canton in China, and greatly benefited from it. The Embargo Act from Thomas Jefferson in 1807, however, disrupted his import/export business.

For Trade Empire: With the permission of President Jefferson, Astor established the American Fur Company on April 6, 1808. He later formed subsidiaries: the Pacific Fur Company and the Southwest Fur Company (in which Canadians had a part), in order to control fur trading in the Columbia River and Great Lakes area.

Founding of Astoria: Upon news from the Lewis & Clark Expedition to the Pacific in 1804/05, Astor financed and dispatched two expeditions to the mouth of Columbia River, the sea-expedition of the "Tonquin" under Captain Jonathan Thorn, which founded the fur-trading post "Astoria" on 12 April 1811 and the overland-expedition, which left St. Louis on 12 March 1811 under the command of Wilson Price Hunt and arrived in Astoria in Februay 1812. The Columbia River trading post at Fort Astoria was the first United States community on the Pacific coast. Members of the expedition were to discover South Pass through which hundreds of thousands settlers on the Oregon, California, and Mormon trails passed through the Rocky Mountains. Astoria, the "oldes American settlement west of the Rockies celebrates its Bicentennial in 2011.

War of 1812: Astor's fur trading ventures were disrupted when the British captured his trading posts during the War of 1812 and renamed it "Fort George", but rebounded in 1817 after the U.S. Congress passed a protectionist law that barred foreign traders from U.S. Territories. The American Fur Company once again came to dominate trading in the area around the Great Lakes. In 1822, Astor established the Astor House on Mackinac Island as headquarters for the reformed American Fur Company, making the island a metropolis of the fur trade. A lengthy description based on documents, diaries etc. was given by Washington Irving in his travelogue *Astoria*.

Real estate: In 1802, Astor purchased what remained of a 99 year lease from Aaron Burr for $62,500. At the time, Burr was serving as vice president under Thomas Jefferson and was desperately short on cash. The lease was to run until May 1, 1866. Astor began subdividing the land into nearly 250 lots and subleased them. His conditions were that the tenant could do whatever they wish with the lots for 21 years, after which they must renew the lease or Astor would take back the lot.

In the 1830s, John Jacob Astor foresaw that the next big boom would be the build-up of New York, which would soon emerge as one of the world's greatest cities. In 1834, Astor withdrew from the American Fur Company, as well as all his other ventures, and used the money to buy and develop large tracts of Manhattan real estate. Predicting the rapid growth northward on Manhattan Island, Astor purchased more and more land beyond the current city limits. Astor rarely built on his land, and instead let others pay rent to use it.

Later life: After retiring from business, Astor spent the rest of his life as a patron of culture. He supported the theater, the arts, and among others the ornithologist John James Audubon, the poet/writer Edgar Allan Poe, and the presidential campaign of Henry Clay.

At the time of his death in 1848, Astor was the wealthiest person in the United States, leaving an estate estimated to be worth at least $20 million, although most of it was invested in real estate. In his will, which he changed quiet often by 8 codicils, Astor left $400,000 to build the Astor Library for the public of New York City (later consolidated with other libraries to form New York Public Library), as well as $50,000 for a poorhouse for orphans and old people in his German hometown, Walldorf. Astor left the bulk of his fortune to his second son, William Backhouse, since his eldest son, John Jacob II, had a mental disability. But Astor left enough money to care for him for the rest of his life.

John Jacob Astor is interred in the Trinity Churchyard Cemetery in Manhattan (between Broadway and Riverside Drive at 153rd Street). The famous pair of marble lions that sit by the stairs of The New York Public Library at Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street were origially named Leo Astor and Leo Lenox, after Astor and James Lenox, who founded the library. Then they were called Lord Astor and Lady Lenox (both lions are males), before being given the names Patience and Fortitude by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia during the Great Depression. Herman Melville used Astor as a symbol of the earliest fortunes in New York in his novella *Bartleby, the Scrivener*.

References: There exists quite a large number of books and articles published on John Jacob Astor. The same goes for the information on the internet, which often is not reliable.

JOHN JACOB ASTOR II (1791-1869)

Born: 1788 in NYC
Died: 1869 in NYC (insane)
Parents: John Jacob Astor (1763-1848) and Sarah Todd (1762-1834)

MAGDALEN ASTOR (1788-1832)

Born: 1788 in NYC - **Died:** 1832 in NYC
Spouses and children:
1. Adrian **Bentzon**
   Son: John Jacob **Bentzon**
   Daughter: Sarah
2. John **Bristed**
   Son: Charles Astor **Bristed**

Parents: John Jacob Astor (1763-1848) and Sarah Todd (1762-1834)

CHARLES ASTOR BRISTED (1820-1874)

Charles Astor Bristed was an American scholar and author, sometimes writing under the nom de plume **Carl Benson**. He was the first American to write a full-length defense of Americanisms.
Born: 6 October 1820 - **Died:** 15 January 1874
Spouses and Children:
1. Laura Whetten **Brevoort** (1823-1848)
2. Grace Ashumer **Dedgwick** (1833-1897)

Parents: Magdalen Astor (1788-1832) and John Bristed

Biography: Bristed was born in New York City, New York, the son of the Reverend John Bristed and Magdalena Astor (daughter of John Jacob Astor). He graduated from Yale College in 1839 with honors, and from Trinity College, Cambridge, England, in 1845, taking numerous prizes and being made a foundation scholar of the college. He returned to the United States in 1847, and married as his first wife Laura Whetten Brevoort (1823-1848, the daughter of Henry Brevoort and Sarah Whetten); and as his second wife Grace Ashburner Sedgwick (1833-1897, the daughter of Charles Sedgwick and Elizabeth Buckminster Dwight), by whom he had two sons.

He amused himself contributing articles, poetical translations, critical papers on the classics, and sketches of society to various journals, and in 1849 edited "Selections from Catullus," for school use. In 1850 he pub-

lished "Letters to the Hon. Horace Mann," being a reply to some strictures upon the characters of Girard and Astor. In 1852 a collection of his sketches on New York Society entitled "The Upper Ten Thousand," appeared in the "Fraser Magazine." At the same time he published "Four Years in an English University," in which he described the manners, customs, and mode of life but little understood in this country.

Bristed exhibited in his writings a keen appreciation of men and books. His wide scholarship makes his essays valuable, and marks his criticisms with the best qualities of a trained university man. He also published many clever poetical translations from the classics. In his later years he resided in Washington, D.C. He was a frequent contributor to the "Galaxy," under the pen-name "Carl Benson," and published "The Interference Theory of Governments," a book denunciatory of tariff and prohibitory liquor laws, and "Pieces of a Broken-down Critic."
He was one of the trustees of the Astor Library from its origin. He died in Washington, D.C.

References: The National Cyclopædia of American Biography, Volume 6. New York: James T. White & Company (1929) 366.

DOROTHEA ASTOR (1795-1853)

Born: 1795 in NYC - **Died:** 1853 in NYC
Spouse: married 24 Sep 1812 in Portmouth, NH Colonel Walter **Langdon**
Children:

1. Sarah Shelburne **Langdon** (†1895 in Nizza) married Baron Robert Boreel
2. John **Langdon** (remained unmarried)
3. Eliza **Langdon**, married Matthew Wilks
4. Louisa Dorothea **Langdon**, married Oliver DeLancey Kane
5. Walter **Langdon**, Catherine Livingston
6. Woodbury **Langdon**, married Helen Colford Jones
7. Cecilia **Langdon**, married Jean de Nottbeck
8. Eugene **Langdon**, married Harriet Lowndes

Parents: John Jacob Astor (1763-1848) and Sarah Todd (1762-1834)

ELIZA ASTOR (1801-1838)

Born: 1801 in NYC - **Died:** 1838
Spouse: Married on 10 Dec 1925 Vincent Graf von Rumpff, Hanseatic League Minister in Paris
Parents: John Jacob Astor (1763-1848) and Sarah Todd (1762-1834)

JOHN JACOB ASTOR II (1791-1869)

Born: 1788 in NYC
Died: 1869 in NYC (insane)
Parents: John Jacob Astor (1763-1848) and Sarah Todd (1762-1834)

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   Daughter: Sarah
2. John **Bristed**
   Son: Charles Astor **Bristed**

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He amused himself contributing articles, poetical translations, critical papers on the classics, and sketches of society to various journals, and in 1849 edited "Selections from Catullus," for school use. In 1850 he pub-

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3. Eliza **Langdon**, married Matthew Wilks
4. Louisa Dorothea **Langdon**, married Oliver DeLancey Kane
5. Walter **Langdon**, Catherine Livingston
6. Woodbury **Langdon**, married Helen Colford Jones
7. Cecilia **Langdon**, married Jean de Nottbeck
8. Eugene **Langdon**, married Harriet Lowndes

Parents: John Jacob Astor (1763-1848) and Sarah Todd (1762-1834)

ELIZA ASTOR (1801-1838)

Born: 1801 in NYC - **Died:** 1838
Spouse: Married on 10 Dec 1925 Vincent Graf von Rumpff, Hanseatic League Minister in Paris
Parents: John Jacob Astor (1763-1848) and Sarah Todd (1762-1834)

WILLIAM BACKHOUSE ASTOR (1792-1875)

William Backhouse Astor, Sr. American businessman.
Born: 19 September 1792 in New York City
Died: 24 November 1875[1] (aged 83) in New York City
Spouse: Margaret Rebecca Armstrong (*1800 in Albany NY, †1872) married on 20 May 1818 in Red Hook, Dutchess County, NY; daughter of United States Secretary of War and Senator John Armstrong, Jr..
Children:

1. **Emily** (1819-1841), married Sam Ward, Jr (*27 Jan 1814 NYC, †1884) financier, lobbyist, author; son of Samuel Ward and Julia Rush Cutler. One daughter: Margaret Astor (1838-1875) married John Winthrop Chanler
2. **John Jacob Astor III** (*10 Jun 1822 in NYC, †22 Feb 1890 in NYC), married 1843 or 1846? Charlotte Augusta Gibbes (1822-1887), daughter of Thomas Stanyarned Gibbes
3. **Laura Eugenia** (1824-1902), married on 17 Sep 1844 Franklin Hughes Delano (*27 Jul 1813 in Dartmouth, MA, †1893)
4. **Mary Alida** (1826-1981), married John Carey (1821-1881). Their daughter Margaret Laura Astor Carey (1853-1911) became Baroness de Stuers before her divorce, then marriage in 1880 to Count William Eliot Morris Zborowski (1858-1903) who was later to die in a racing car accident, as was their son Count Louis Zborowski who was killed at the Italian Grand Prix in 1924.
5. **William Waldorf Backhouse, Jr.** (1830-1892), William Backhouse Astor, Jr. (1830-1892), married Caroline Webster Schermerhorn (1830 -1908)
6. **Henry Astor** (* July 1830 in NCY, †1918 in West Copake, NY), married on 4 May 1871 in Rhinebeck, Duchess Co, NY Malvina Dinehart (*Apr 1845 in NCY)
7. **Sarah** (1832-1832 died in infancy)

Parents: John Jacob Astor (1763-1848)
Sarah Todd (1762-1834)
Relatives: Henry Astor (1754-1833) Uncle
John Jacob Astor IV (1864-1912) Grandson

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[1] "Death of a noted citizen. Mr. William B. Astor. an illness of four days ends an honored and successful life the public events in Mr. Astor's career a ripe scholar and philanthropic man.". *The New York Times*.
"Mr. William B. Astor, after an illness of only a few days, died at his residence in this City yesterday at 9:30 A.M., aged eightytwo years. Mr. Astor was in his usual good health, except for a slight cold, until Saturday of last week. On that morning his cold began to trouble him and occasioned a severe cough."

Biography: William Backhouse Astor was the second-oldest son of John Jacob Astor and Sarah Todd Astor. Born in New York City, where he attended public schools. When he was sixteen, he was sent to the University of Göttingen in Germany, where he joined the German Student Corps Curonia of the Baltic-German students; later he moved to the University of Heidelberg. In 1815, when he was twenty-three years old, he returned to the United States and entered partnership with his father, who changed the name of his firm to John Jacob Astor & Son. (His brother, John Jacob Astor II, was, as one early-twentieth-century source put it, "feeble-minded," and incapable of working in the firm.[2]) He worked there until his father's death. One source argued that his role in the company was never anything more than as an "an industrious and faithful head clerk," despite his official title of head of the firm's chief subsidiary, the American Fur Company, in its last several years of its ownership by Astor & Son.

Although William Backhouse's fortunes grew with his father's company, he became a truly wealthy man when he inherited the estate, worth around $500,000, of his uncle, Henry Astor who died without children. When his father died in 1848, however, he became the richest man in America; he was the last member of the Astor family to enjoy this distinction.
During the American Civil War he successfully brought a case against the income tax imposed by the United States government, which was ruled unconstitutional. His management of the family real estate holdings succeeded in multiplying their value, and he left an estate worth close to $50 million.

At this time that the Astor fortune underwent its first major division between William Backhouse Astor, Jr. (1830-1892) and John Jacob Astor III (1822-1890), whose son William Waldorf Astor relocated to Great Britain in 1893. His sons, whose side-by-side mansions were on the site later occupied by the first Waldorf-Astoria Hotel (a family property) and then the Empire State Building, inaugurated an era of both more flamboyant living and more generous philanthropy than their austere father and grandfather.

Further reading

- Anon. (1928-1936). "William Backhouse Astor.". *Dictionary of American Biography Base Set*. New York: American Council of Learned Societies, Reproduced in Biography Resource Center. Farmington Hills, Mich.: Thomson Gale. 2007..
- "Astor, John Jacob". *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th ed.). 1911. This article also has a paragraph on William Backhouse, Sr.

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[2] *Dictionary of American Biography*. American Council of Learned Societies. 1928-1936.

HENRY ASTOR (1832-1918)

Henry Astor
Born: July 1830 in NYC
Died: 1918 in West Copake, NY
Spouse: married on 4 May 1871 in Rhinebeck, Duchess Co, NY Malvina Dinehart (*Apr 1845 in NCY)
Parents:
William Backhouse Astor, Sr. (*19 Sep 1792 NYC, †24 Nov 1875 NYC)
Margaret Rebecca Armstrong (*1800 in Albany NY, †1872)

The younger brother of John Jacob Astor III and William Backhouse Astor, Jr., Henry married Malvina Dinehart of Red Hook, NY in 1871. The match with Ms. Dinehart, whose father is variously described as the head farmer or the gardner for the Astor family farm in Red Hook (which Henry managed), was considered socially unacceptable. Henry was estranged from his father, brothers and all but one of his sisters as a result. His reputed disinheritance for falling in love with a poor woman became a celebrated scandal in New York society. Henry withdrew from New York society to live the quiet life of a gentleman farmer with his new wife in a house he designed himself in West Copake, NY. (Sometimes referred to in his time as Astorville.) Shortly before his death it became public knowledge that, although substantially reduced from a full share, his inheritance still put him among the richest men in the United States. Henry and Malvina were childless and his fortune reverted to his siblings and their issue upon his death, although his wife was guaranteed the interest from one-third of the estate for the remainder of her life.

JOHN WINTHROP CHANLER (1826-1877)

John Winthrop Chanler: Prominent New York lawyer and a U.S. Representative from New York
Born: 14 September 1826 in New York City
Died: 19 October 1877 at "Rokeby" in Barrytown, NY (interred with his wife in Trinity Church Cemetery NYC)
Spouse: Margaret Astor (1838-1875), granddaughter of William Backhouse Sr. (1792-1975)
Children:
John Armstrong Chandler (married Amélie Rives)
Winthrop Astor Chanler (married Margaret Terry)
William Astor Chanler (married Minnie Ashley)
Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler (married Julia Olim)

Margaret Livingston (married Richard Aldrich)
Robert Winthrop Chanler (married Lina Cavalieri)
Alida Beekman (married Christopher Temple Emmet)
Two sons died

Parents:

Emily Astor (1819-1841) and Sam Ward, Jr (*27 Jan 1814 NYC, †1884) financier, lobbyist, author; son of Samuel Ward and Julia Rush Cutler.

Biography: Born in New York City, Chanler received his early education from private tutors, and graduated from Columbia College, New York City, in 1847. He attended the University of Heidelberg in Heidelberg, Germany. With his degree in law, Chanler was admitted to the New York State Bar and practiced law.

He served as member of the State assembly in 1858 and 1859. He was nominated as a candidate for State senator in 1860 but declined. He was an unsuccessful candidate for election in 1860 to the Thirty-seventh Congress.

Chanler was elected as a Democrat to the Thirty-eighth, Thirty-ninth, and Fortieth United States Congresses, serving from March 4, 1863 to March 3, 1869. He was censured by the Thirty-ninth Congress on May 14, 1866 for an insult to the House of Representatives.

Chanler married into the prominent Astor family of New York. His wife, Margaret Astor Ward (1838-1875), was the granddaughter of William Backhouse Astor, Sr.. The couple had ten children, including politicians William Astor Chanler and Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, as well as the artist Robert Winthrop Chanler.

New York State Assembly: Member 1858 and 1859

US House of Representatives: Member from New York 1863-1869

References: John Winthrop Chanler at the *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*

WILLIAM ASTOR CHANLER (1867-1934)

William Astor Chanler
Born: 11 June 1867 in Newport, RI
Died: 4 March 1934
Spouse: Beatrice Minerva Ashley
Children:
William Astor Chanler Jr., historian
Sidney Asley Chanler, public relation executive
Parents:
John Winthrop Chanler (1826-1877) + Margaret Astor Ward (1838-1875)

Great-Grandfather: William Backhouse Astor Sr. (1792-1875)

Born in Newport, Rhode Island, Chanler attended St. John's School, Ossining, New York, Phillips Academy, Exeter, New Hampshire, and Harvard University for two years. A Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society of London, in 1889 William Chanler explored the territory in the vicinity of Mount Kilimanjaro with Austrian Ludwig von Hohnel. Many of the African animals in the American Museum of Natural History were donated by him after being collected on this expedition.

He was as delegate to the State Republican convention at Saratoga, New York in 1896 and served as member of the State assembly in 1897. During the Spanish-American War, he was appointed captain and assistant adjutant general of Volunteers on May 10, 1898. He served as acting ordnance officer, Cavalry Division, Fifth Army Corps, from May 23 to August 23, 1898. He participated in the Battle of Santiago de Cuba.

Chanler was elected as a Democrat to the Fifty-sixth Congress, serving from March 4, 1899 to March 3, 1901. He was not a candidate for renomination in 1900. Traveler, author, and explorer. He had spent considerable time in Europe and moved there in 1920. He died in Menton, Alpes-Maritimes, France on March 4, 1934. His remains were returned home for interment in the Trinity Church Cemetery in New York City.

An owner of Thoroughbred racehorses, he raced both in the United States and in France. One of his trainers was U.S. Racing Hall of Fame inductee, Preston M. Burch.

First hand account recorded on August 17,1905; "Late this evening I went up to the Manhattan Casino. The William Astor Chanler association was holding its summer night festival and outing there. Mr. C. has explored a little in Africa: he is now exploring darkest Tammany. I noticed him, a manly young fellow, surrounded by some politicians, and while apparently a good mixer, he betrayed a subconscious pant as if the element was not just to his taste. So have I felt and bravely overcome. So I permitted the bands, that played unusually sweet music, to set me whirling almost any petticoated reveler that came to hand in the mazy dance. So I lived awhile, while others paused." Edwin Manners

US House of Representatives: Member from New York 1899-1901

References:

William A. Chanler at the *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*
The Journal of Edwin Manners

LEWIS STUYVESANT CHANLER (1869-1942)

Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler: New York lawyer and politician.
Born: September 24, 1869 in Newport, RI
Died: February 28, 1942 in New York City (Obituary, *New York Times*, Mar 4, 1942, p. 19)
Spouses:
1st 1890 (div.) Alice Chamberlain (1868-1955)
2nd 1921 Juli (Olin) Benkard (1882-1961), (she had previously married a Benkard)
Children:
1. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler Jr. (1891-1961), m. 1st around 1920 Leslie Murray; m. 2nd aft6er 1940 Mary Kroehle
   a. Susan Chanler (1921-1996) m. Clifford E. Herrick Jr. (1916-1978)
   b. Bronson Winthrop Chanler (1922-2009), m. Evelyn Williams Rogers (1931)
   c. Clare Chanler (1927-1992), m. Bayard Forster (1924-2001)
   d. Rosanna Chanler (1930), m. Montgomery Harris
2. Alida Chanler (1894-1983), m. William Christian Bohn
3. William Chamberlain Chanler (1895-1981) m. Frances Randall W"illiam

Parents:
John Winthrop Chanler (1826-1877) + Margaret Astor Ward (1838-1875)
Great-Grandfather: William Backhouse Astor, Sr. (1792-1875)

1. Biography: Lewis was the son of John Winthrop Chanler and Margaret Astor Ward. [1] He attended Columbia University where he received his LL.B. in 1891. Then he attended Cambridge University, matriculating in 1894. He became a lawyer, and practiced in New York.
He was elected Lieutenant Governor of New York in 1906 on the combined ticket of the Democratic Party and the Independence League, defeating the incumbent M. Linn Bruce, although his running mate William Randolph Hearst was defeated in his quest for the governorship by Republican Charles Evans Hughes. As the sitting lieutenant governor, he ran as the Democratic candidate for Governor against the incumbent Hughes in 1908, and was defeated. This candidacy was opposed by Hearst, who lampooned him in a series of cartoons.
While a resident of Barrytown, Dutchess County, New York, he was a member of the New York State Assembly from Dutchess County's 2nd District from 1910 to 1912. Franklin D. Roosevelt had at first thought of running for this seat in the assembly, but Chanler refused to give it up. Thus, Roosevelt ran for the senate instead.
About 1920, Chanler and his first wife divorced and the next year he married Julia Benkard, also a recent divorcee with two daughters of her own.

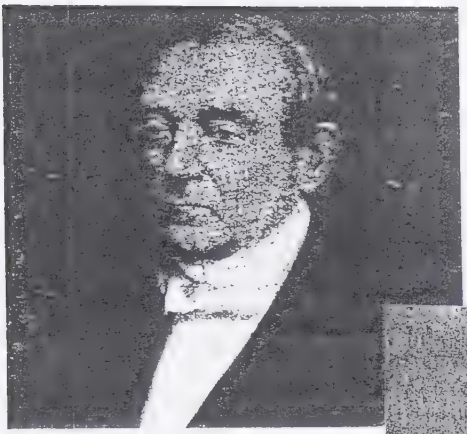
The family bought a new home at 132 East 65th Street, in New York City. This house was later christened *Caravan House*.
Julia was first introduced to the Bahá'í Faith in 1925, and joined after a short time. Becoming on intimate terms with Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, the three of them formed the *New History Society*. Several works were published by the Society both before, during and after the events which led to their expulsion from the Bahá'í community by Shoghi Effendi in 1939. Sohrab taught classes on the Bahá'í Faith and when the local New York administration stated that these classes must be under their authority, the group challenged and then were expelled from the movement. During this time they created the *Caravan of East and West* which was an educational organization designed to prepare members for membership in the Bahá'í Faith. They continued and greatly expanded their work in New York City. After the deaths of Sohrab and Julie, the Society appears to have vanished, but the Caravan lived on and still exists as a non-profit, at the same address.
He died in 1942 at his home in New York City. His obituary appeared in the *New York Times* on Mar 4. His funeral was conducted at St Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie by Rev. C.A.W. Brocklebank. After the scriptural reading, Mirza Ahmad Sohrab read from "the service for the departed" of the Bahá'í religion. Chanler was buried at St Paul's Churchyard in Glen Cove, Long Island.
Lieutenant Governor of New York 1907-1908
Democratic Nominee for Governor of New York 1908 (defeated)
New York State Assembly, Durchess County 2nd District 1910-1012

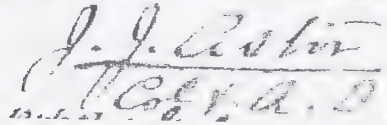
ROBERT WINTHROP CHANLER (1872-1930)

Robert Winthrop Chanler
Born: 1872 in New York City
Died: 1930
Spouse: Lina Cavalieri
Parents:
John Winthrop Chanler (1826-1877) + Margaret Astor Ward (1838-1875)
Great-Grandfather: William Backhouse Astor, Sr. (1792-1875)

Robert Winthrop Chanler (1872-1930) was born in New York City to John Winthrop Chanler and Margaret Astor Ward, in a sea of wealthy and interconnected Hudson River families that included the Astors, Delanos, Winthrops and Stuyvesants. A designer and muralist, Chanler received much of his art training in France at the École des Beaux-Arts, and there his most famous work titled "Giraffes," was completed in 1905 and later purchased by the French Government.

Robert D. Coe, who studied with him, described Chanler as being "Eccentric and almost bizarre."
Chanler specialized in painted screens and was a member of the National Society of Mural Painters. A ceiling mural of buffaloes painted by Chanler is in the Coe House in Brookville, New York. He was also a member of the Architectural League of New York. His work was featured in the 1913 Armory Show in New York.
He had a whirlwind romance and marriage to Lina Cavalieri. This marriage lasted only a short time, after which Cavalieri returned to Europe where she became a much-loved star in pre-Revolutionary St. Petersburg, Russia and in the Ukraine.
Like Mai Rogers Coe and Everett Shinn, Chanler was staying in Paris in the 1890s and became involved with the art community. When he returned to the U.S in the early 1900s he purchased a townhouse on East 19th Street, decorated it with his own works, and called it his House of Fantasy that became a social center for New York's art community. Like Everett Shinn, Chanler was a personality and a figure in his time.
Like many women of her class, Mai Rogers Coe was a patron of artists and had a taste for the elaborate decorative works of Robert Winthrop Chanler. Chanler painted decorative murals in Mai Coe's Bedroom (1921) and in the family's breakfast room, the Buffalo Room (1920).
Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney and Mai Rogers Coe were perhaps Chanler's greatest patrons, but he received commissions from other wealthy families for decorative murals and screens. By 1920, when he completed the murals in the Buffalo Room, Chanler's work was well known. He later received favorable commentary in The Upholsterer and Interior Decorator Magazine for his murals in Mai Coe's bedroom (1921) and in International Studio magazine for his painted screens (1922). Chanler designed murals for Gertrude's studio in Greenvale, including a sea world fantasy in the bathroom. The studio is extant and privately owned.
Around this time, Chicago industrialist James Deering commissioned him to paint an "undersea fantasy" fresco on the ceiling of the indoor/outdoor swimming pool at Villa Vizcaya (1916-1925), Deering's winter home in Miami, Florida.
Chanler's work has been compared to the fantastical works of some renaissance painters. His works involve the use of sculpted gesso, transparent glazes, and gilded finishes to produce ornate and decorative designs. His work still exists in his family's estate, "Rokeby" near Barrytown, New York, the Luxembourg Museum and in private collections across the country.





William Backhouse Astor (1792-1875) and his son John Jacob Astor III (1822-1890)
as civilian and as colonel

JOHN JACOB ASTOR III (1822-1890)

John Jacob Astor III [1] was the elder son of William Backhouse Astor, Sr. and the wealthiest member of the Astor family in his generation[2],[3]. Civil War Union Brevet Brigadier General, Financier.

Born: 10 June 1822

Died: 22 February 1890 (aged 67) in Manhattan, NYC (interred in Trinity Church Cemetery NYC, Plot: Westerly Division, Lots 743-786 / Memorial # 2304)[4]

Spouse: Charlotte Augusta Gibbes (1825-1887) in 1846, she was the daughter of Thomas Stanyarne Gibbes

Children: William Waldorf Astor (*31 Mar 1848, †18 Nov 1919)

Parents: William Backhouse Astor, Sr (1792-1875)
Margaret Rebecca Armstrong (1800-1872)

Grandfather: John Jacob Astor (1763-1848)

Biography: Astor studied at Columbia College and the University of Göttingen in German; afterwards he went to Harvard Law School. During the American Civil War he served as a volunteer aide-de-camp to General George B. McClellan. For his services during the Peninsular Campaign he was brevetted brigadier general of U.S. Volunteers.

As a businessman, he dabbled in railroad investment, but was forced to yield control of the original New York Central Railroad line (from Albany to Buffalo) to Cornelius Vanderbilt. His principal business interest was of course the vast Astor Estate real estate holdings in New York City, which he managed profitably and parsimoniously. However, some of his properties were an exploitation of the poor in an era when municipal authorities rarely enforced building codes.

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[1] Some sources such as Time magazine list him as John Jacob Astor II, and discount the birth of John Jacob Astor (1791-1869) who was unstable.

[2] "Milestones". *Time (magazine)*. 1939. "To celebrate the fourth birthday of Millionheir* William Astor, his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Jacob Astor III, invited his playmates to a party on the lawn of Chetwode, pillared Astor mansion at Newport. *When John Jacob Astor II went down on the Titanic, most of his fortune went to 20-year-old Son Vincent, only a few million to Son John Jacob III, then unborn. Since Vincent has no direct heirs, William is heir apparent to both fortunes."

[3] "John Jacob Astor II". *New York Times*. August 24, 1890. "John Jacob Astor, the second of the name, was born in New-York June 10, 1822. His parents were William B. Astor, son of the founder of the family, and Margaret Rebecca, daughter and granddaughter of the Armstrongs of Revolutionary honor."

[4] "John Jacob Astor Dead. Heart Disease Carries Him Off Suddenly. The End Of A Placid And Useful Life Full Of Good Deeds. William Waldorf Astor His Only Heir.". New York Times. February 23, 1890.

In 1846, he married Charlotte Augusta Gibbes of South Carolina and in 1859 he built a home at 350 Fifth Avenue, which is today the street address of the Empire State Building. Later, he added an imposing vacation home, *Beaulieu*, in Newport, Rhode Island.

John Jacob Astor III had little inclination to do much in the way of charitable works beyond continuing gifts made by his ancestors to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Trinity Church, and the Astor Library. However, his deeply religious wife had quite a different attitude. Charlotte Astor supported the newly formed Children's Aid Society and sat on the board of the Women's Hospital of New York, an institution that to her dismay refused to accept cancer patients. Deciding to do something about it, she persuaded her husband to donate the money to erect the New York Cancer Hospital's first wing, the "Astor Pavilion." He devoted his life to philanthropy and civic affairs. He and his wife Charlotte provided funding for a host of charities, including the Children's Aid Society, the Astor Library, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the New York Cancer Hospital.

Aristocratic by inclination, he increasingly visited London in his later years, and his only child, William Waldorf Astor, would move there permanently with his family in 1891.[5]

Military Service: During the Civil War, Astor served as a volunteer Aide-de-Camp to General George B. McClellan, and received the brevet of Brigadier General, US Volunteers on March 13, 1865 for "meritorious services in the campaign of the Peninsula". A monument erected in his memory is directly across from the Astor family vault.

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[5] "Viscount Astor Died Suddenly of Heart Disease. Stricken Saturday Morning, After Having Passed Part of Preceding Day Outdoors. Body Will Be Cremated and the Ashes Placed in Private Chapel at Cliveden. Peerage Came as Reward for War Gifts. Realty Holdings Here Valued at $60,000,000. Little Known to British Public. Estate Will Pay a Heavy Tax. His Pursuit of Title Evoked Bitter Criticism. Became a British Subject in 1899. Peerage Followed War Gifts.". *New York Times*. October 20, 1919. "Viscount Astor died yesterday morning. His death, which was from heart disease, was unexpected."

WILLIAM BACKHOUSE ASTOR, JR (1830-1892)

William Backhouse Astor, Jr. was a businessman and a member of the prominent Astor-Family
Born: 12 July 1830
Died: 25 April 1892 in Hotel *Meurice* in Paris, France
Spouse: Married Caroline Webster Schermerhorn (*22 Sep 1830, †30 Oct 1908) married in 1854
Children:

1. Emily (*1854-1881), married James J. Van Alen
2. Helen Schermerhorn (*1855 in NCY, †Nov 1893), married on 18 Nov 1878 in NYC James Roosevelt Roosevelt (*1854 in NCY, †7 May 1927 in Hyde Park, Dutchess County, NY)
3. Charlotte Augusta (*1858-1920), married (1) James Coleman Drayton and (2) George Ogilvy Haig
4. Caroline Schermerhorn (*1861-1948), married Marshall Orme Wilson
5. John Jacob Astor IV (1864-1912) married (1) Ava Lowle Willing and (2) Madeleine Talmadge Force

Parents: William Backhouse Astor, Sr. (*19 Sep 1792, †24 Nov 1875)
Margaret Rebecca Armstrong (*1800 in Albany NY, †1872)

The younger son of William Backhouse Astor, Sr., he was joint heir to the Astor real estate empire, though he left its active management to his elder brother John Jacob Astor III (1822-1890).
Astor graduated from Columbia College in 1849. In 1853 he married the socially ambitious Caroline Webster Schermerhorn, who reigned over New York and Newport society as simply "the Mrs. Astor." William, however, had little interest in society parties, and his wife would try to have him kept late at his club to prevent him coming home and throwing the orchestra out and sending his children to bed.
He supported the abolition of slavery before the American Civil War, and during the war, he personally bore the cost to equip an entire Union Army regiment.
Unlike his business oriented father, William Backhouse Astor, Jr. did not aggressively pursue an expansion of his inherited fortune, preferring life aboard the "*Ambassadress*," at the time the largest private yacht in the world, or horseback riding at Ferncliff, the large estate he had built on the Hudson River. Astor's horse "Vagrant" won the 1876 running of the Kentucky Derby.
William Astor often spent winters in Jacksonville, Florida aboard his yacht and was responsible for the construction of a number of prominent buildings in the city. Liking the area, in 1874, he purchased a land tract of around 80,000 acres (320 km²) along the St. Johns River north of Orlando in an area now called Lake County, Florida. There, on what had once

been a 16th century Huguenot settlement destroyed by the Spanish, he and two partners used 12,000 acres (49 km²) to build an entire town that he named Manhattan but was later changed to Astor in his honor.
His project, which would come to include several hotels, began with the construction of wharves on the river to accommodate steamboats. These steamboats attracted a steamship agency that could bring in the necessary materials and supplies. William Astor enjoyed his development and purchased a railroad that connected the town to the "Great Lakes Region" of Florida. He donated the town's first church and the land for the local non-denominational cemetery, and he also helped build a schoolhouse, both of which are still standing today. In 1875, one of the many nearby lakes was named Lake Schermerhorn after William Astor's wife, Caroline Schermerhorn Astor.
The town of Manhattan, Florida boomed, and William Astor, with an eye on the large New York market, expanded his interests to a grapefruit grove, a fruit that at the time was only available on a very limited basis in other parts of the United States. But William Astor did not live long enough to see the orchard grow to production. Following his death in 1892, the property fell to his son, John Jacob Astor IV. By then though, rapid changes were taking place throughout Florida. New railroads had been built in 1885 through the central and western part of the state, and in the late 1890s, Henry Flagler built a railroad line running down Florida's east coast from Daytona Beach. All this expansion left the town of Astor isolated and it was all but abandoned after train service to Astor was discontinued.
William Backhouse Astor, Jr. died of a heart attack in 1892 in Paris, France.

CAROLINE W. S. ASTOR (1830-1908)

Caroline Webster Schermerhorn Astor (September 22, 1830 - October 30, 1908) was a prominent American socialite of the last quarter of the 19th century. Famous for being referred to as simply "the Mrs. Astor" later in life, she was the wife of real estate heir William Backhouse Astor Jr.
Born: 22 September 1830
Died: 30 October 1908 (aged 78)
Spouse: William Backhouse Astor, Jr. (*12 July 1830, †25 April 1892) married in 1854
Children:
1. Emily (*1854-1881), married James J. Van Alen
2. Helen Schermerhorn (*1855 in NCY, †Nov 1893), married on 18 Nov 1878 in NYC James Roosevelt Roosevelt (*1854 in NCY, †7 May 1927 in Hyde Park, Dutchess County, NY)

3. Charlotte Augusta (*1858-1920), married 1. James Coleman Drayton and 2. George Ogilvy Haig
4. Caroline Schermerhorn (*1861-1948), married Marshall Orme Wilson
5. John Jacob Astor IV (1864-1912) married 1. Ava Lowle Willing and 2. Madeleine Talmadge Force

Parents: Abraham Schermerhorn and Helen White

Childhood and youth: Caroline Webster Schermerhorn was born into New York City's Dutch aristocracy, descendants of the city's original settlers; her father, his brother and the extended Schermerhorn family were engaged in shipping. Raised at 1 Greenwich Street, near the Bowling Green, until the age of 10, the population growth and increasing urbanization of lower Manhattan in the 1830s led her family to move farther north to 36 Bond Street, near the then-ultra fashionable Lafayette Place (now Street), which had been developed by her future father-in-law, William Backhouse Astor. Caroline married William Backhouse Astor, Jr. in 1854.

Housewife and socialite: Although popularly imagined as wholly preoccupied with "Society", for the first several decades of her married life "Lina" Astor was principally occupied with raising her five children and running her household, typical of women of her class in mid 19th century New York City. In 1862 she and her husband built a four-bay townhouse in the newly fashionable brownstone at 350 Fifth Avenue, the present site of the Empire State Building, next door to her husband's older brother, John Jacob Astor III; the two families were next-door neighbors for 28 years although the Astor brothers did not get along.

The gatekeeper: In the decades following the Civil War the population of New York City grew almost exponentially, and immigrants and *arrivistes* from the Midwest began challenging the dominance of the old New York Establishment of which Lina Astor and her family were part. Her desire to be the unchallenged *grande dame* of New York society was as much about preserving the heritage and traditions of her native New York, a conflict dramatized by Edith Wharton in *The Age of Innocence*, as it was about excluding those whom she deemed inferior.

Aided by the social arbiter Ward McAllister, whose life work was the codification and maintenance of the rules of social intercourse, Lina Astor attempted to codify proper behavior and etiquette, which had formerly been a *lingua franca* among the city's Establishment, as well as determine who was acceptable among the *arrivistes* for an increasingly heterogeneous city. McAllister once stated that, amongst the vastly rich families of Gilded Age New York, there were only 400 people who could be counted as members of Fashionable Society. He did not, as is commonly written, arrive at this number based on the limitations of Mrs. Astor's New York City ballroom. (McAllister, an Astor cousin by marriage, referred to her as the "Mystic Rose".) Her husband's lack of interest, not

only in the social whirl but in Lina herself and their marriage, did not stop but instead fueled her burgeoning social activities, which increased in intensity as her children grew older.

In 1883, however, Caroline Astor was forced to formally socially acknowledge Alva Vanderbilt, the first wife of William Kissam Vanderbilt, thereby providing the Vanderbilts, the greatest "new" fortune in New York, entrance into the highest rungs of society. An oft-repeated New York legend has it that Alva Vanderbilt had planned an elaborate costume ball with entertainments given by young society figures for her housewarming, but at the last minute notified young Caroline Astor (Lina's youngest daughter) that she could not participate, because Mrs. Astor had never formally called on Mrs. Vanderbilt. More likely, Mrs. Astor had noted the rising social profile of the Vanderbilt family, led by Alva and Willie, and viewing them as useful allies in her efforts to keep New York society exclusive had called formally on the Vanderbilts prior to Alva's lavish ball which Mrs. Astor herself attended. The Vanderbilts were subsequently invited to Mrs. Astor's annual ball, a formal acknowledgement of their full acceptance into the upper echelon of New York society.

Head of the family: the Waldorf-Astoria: Until 1887, Caroline Astor had been formally known as "Mrs. William Astor", but with her sister-in-law's death that year, she shortened her formal title to "Mrs. Astor", as she was then the senior Mrs. Astor, the only remaining one in her generation. Her nephew, William Waldorf Astor, felt that his wife should be technically "the Mrs. Astor", as he was the only son of Caroline's husband's elder brother, and he insisted Caroline resume use of "Mrs. William Astor". She refused, and the press sensationalized the family conflict and famously began referring to her as "*The* Mrs. Astor".

On the death of Caroline's brother-in-law John Jacob Astor III in 1890, William Waldorf Astor inherited his father's share of the Astor holdings and, titularly, became the head of the Astor family. His further attempts at challenging his aunt's pre-eminence in New York society, however, were thwarted, and he soon emigrated to Great Britain, where he later became a viscount.

Caroline Astor arranged for an enormous cenotaph (at red arrow) that still dominates the Trinity Church cemetery at Broadway and Wall St.

In retaliation for his aunt's intransigence, William Waldorf Astor had his father's house torn down and replaced by the first Waldorf Hotel. Caroline and her son, John Jacob Astor IV, first contemplated tearing down her house and replacing it with livery stables. "There's a glorified tavern next door," Mrs. Astor famously is quoted as saying. Until the opulence of the Waldorf Hotel revolutionized how New York socialized publicly, polite society didn't gather in public places, especially hotels. Unwilling to live next door to New York's latest sensation and public draw, Caroline and her son tore her house down and erected another hotel at its site, the

Astoria, and soon the two hotels merged and became the original Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, which was torn down in 1928 to make way for the Empire State Building.

Death, grave, and legacy: By the time she moved into her new house facing Central Park, at the corner of 65th Street, her husband had died, and she lived with her son and his family. Caroline Astor spent her last several years suffering from periodic dementia, and she died at age 78 in 1908 and was interred in the Trinity Church Cemetery in lower Manhattan. Her 39 foot tall (11.9 m) cenotaph dominates the small churchyard cemetery at the intersection of Broadway and Wall Street, in which many prominent early Americans are buried.

William B. Astor Jr (1830-1892)

and his wife Caroline Schermerhorn (1830-1908). The painting of "The Mrs. Astor" is by Carolus Durant

John Jacob Astor IV (1864-1912) and his second wife Madeleine (1893-1940)

JOHN JACOB ASTOR IV (1864-1912)

John Jacob Astor IV was an American millionaire businessman, real estate builder, inventor, writer, a member of the prominent Astor family, and a lieutenant colonel in the Spanish-American War. He died in the sinking of the RMS Titanic on April 15, 1912.

Born: 13 July 1864 Rhinebeck, Dutchess Co, NY
Died: 15 April 1912 (aged 47) RMS Titanic (sunk), Atlantic Ocean
Neth Worth: $37.0 billion, according to Wealthy historical figures 2008, based on information from Forbes - February 2008
Spouse and Children:

a) Ava Lowle Willing (*15 Sep 1868 in Philadelphia, †3 Feb 1959 NYC) married 1 May 1891, divorced Nov 1909; 2 children:
   1. Vincent Astor (*Nov 1892 NYC, †3 Feb 1959 NYC)
   2. Ava Alice Muriel Astor (*1902, †19 Jul 1956 NYC by a stroke) married 4 times
b) Madeleine Talmadge Force (*19 Jun 1893 in Brooklyn, NY, †27 Mar 1940 in Palm Beach, FL) married Oct 1911 in Beechwood, Newport, RI; parents William Hurlbut Force and Katherine Arvilla Talmadge
   John Jacob Astor VI (1912-1992)

Parents: William Backhouse Astor, Jr. (1830-1892)
Caroline Webster Schermerhorn (xxx)
Grandfather: William Backhouse Astor, Sr (1792-1875)
Great-Grandfather: John Jacob Astor (1763-1848)

Birth: John Jacob Astor IV was born to William Backhouse Astor, Jr. and Caroline Webster Schermerhorn. John Jacob IV was the great-grandson of John Jacob Astor whose fortune, made in opium, fur trade and real estate, made the Astor family one of the wealthiest families in the United States.
Education: Astor attended St Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire and later attended Harvard University.
Early career: Among Astor's accomplishments was *A Journey in Other Worlds*, an 1894 science fiction novel titled about a fictional account of life in the year 2000 on the planets Saturn and Jupiter. He also patented several inventions, including a bicycle brake in 1898, a "vibratory disintegrator" used to produce gas from peat moss, a pneumatic road-improver, and helped develop a turbine engine. Astor made millions in real estate and in 1897, Astor built the Astoria Hotel, "the world's most luxurious hotel", which adjoined Astor's cousin, William Waldorf Astor's,

Waldorf Hotel in New York City; the complex became known as the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

In 1898 Astor was appointed a lieutenant colonel of a U.S. volunteers battalion he financed in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. During this time he allowed his yacht, the *Nourmahal*, to be used by the U.S. government. During the war Colonel Astor appeared in the films *President McKinley's Inspection of Camp Wikoff* in 1898 and *Col. John Jacob Astor, Staff and Veterans of the Spanish-American War* in 1899.

Marriages: In 1891, John Jacob Astor married Ava Lowle Willing. The couple had two children William Vincent Astor, born in 1891 and Ava Alice Muriel Astor, born in 1902 before their divorce in 1909. Astor's wife, Ava, reportedly had an affair during their marriage, resulting in the birth of daughter Ava. Since no evidence has been found to support the claim, it is assumed that Ava Alice was fathered by Astor. Since divorce was considered a scandal back then, all in high class society were shocked when Astor announced that he would marry again.

At the age of 47, the divorced Astor was married a second time to 18-year-old Madeleine Talmadge Force on September 9, 1911 in his mother's ballroom at Beechwood, the family's Newport, Rhode Island home. He had been divorced two years earlier, and Madeleine was a year younger than Astor's son, Vincent. The couple took an extended honeymoon in Europe and Egypt to wait for the scandalous gossip to calm down. Among the few Americans of the socialite class who did not spurn him at this time was Margaret Brown, better known to posterity as "The Unsinkable Molly Brown". She accompanied the Astors to Egypt and France and, by coincidence, was called home to the U.S. at the same time the Astors also found it necessary to abbreviate their touring.

While traveling Madeleine became pregnant, and wanting the child born in the United States, the Astors booked first-class passage on the RMS *Titanic* which they boarded at Cherbourg, France.

Death: John Jacob Astor was the wealthiest passenger on board the *Titanic* and, as well as his wife Madeleine Astor, his party included his servant, his wife's maid and nurse, and his pet Airedale, Kitty. At 11:40 p.m. on April 14, 1912 the *Titanic* hit an iceberg and began sinking. At first Astor did not believe the ship was in any serious danger, but later he helped his wife into a lifeboat. He asked if he could join her, mentioning her "delicate condition", but the officer in charge told him not until all the women and children were away. Astor reportedly stood back and asked for the lifeboat number, then, after lighting a cigarette, he tossed his gloves to Madeleine. She survived.

John Jacob Astor IV's body was recovered by the steamer *Mackay-Bennett* on April 22 not far from the sinking:

NO. 124 - MALE - ESTIMATED AGE 50 - LIGHT HAIR & MOUSTACHE.
CLOTHING - Blue serge suit; blue handkerchief with "A.V."; belt with gold buckle; brown boots with red rubber soles; brown flannel shirt; "J.J.A." on back of collar.
EFFECTS - Gold watch; cuff links, gold with diamond; diamond ring with three stones; £225 in English notes; $2440 in notes; £5 in gold; 7s. in silver; 5 ten franc pieces; gold pencil; pocketbook.
FIRST CLASS. NAME- J.J. ASTOR

Reports say his body was covered in soot and blood, thus it is assumed he was killed by the first funnel when it collapsed as the Titanic made its final plunge. He was identified by the initials sewn on the label of his jacket. Among the items found on him was a gold pocket watch which his son, Vincent, claimed and wore the rest of his life. Astor was buried in Trinity Church Cemetery in New York City. On August 14, 1912, Madeleine Astor gave birth to his second son, John Jacob Astor VI.[1]

Legacy: John Jacob Astor's prominence made his actions while the *Titanic* was sinking legendary. Many exaggerated and unsubstantiated accounts about what Astor did the night *Titanic* sank appeared in newspapers, books and magazines after the disaster. There was a story that he was the one who opened *Titanic*'s kennel and released the dogs; another story has Astor putting a woman's hat on a boy to make sure he was able to get into a lifeboat. Another legend states that after the ship hit the iceberg, he quipped, "I asked for ice, but this is ridiculous."

Astor's fame has made him an often used character in films about *Titanic*. William Johnstone played Astor in the 1953 film *Titanic*, and in the 1997 version of *Titanic* he was played by Eric Braeden, who was picked for his strong resemblance to Astor. In the 1997 film, he is killed when the Grand Staircase's dome breaks, flooding the entire room. In the 1996 miniseries, he was played by Scott Hylands. Astor was also portrayed by David Janssen in the 1979 film *SOS Titanic*.

AVA LOWLE WILLING (1868-1958)

Ava Lowle Willing, Lady Ribblesdale (1868-1958) was an American socialite and the first wife of John Jacob Astor IV.

Ava Lowle Willing
Born: September 15, 1868 in Pennsylvania, PA
Died: June 19, 1958 (aged 89)
Spouses:
John Jacob Astor IV (married 1891) divorced Nov 1909
Lord Ribbedsdale (married 1919)

[1] "Son for Mrs. Astor. Named for Father. Both Mother and Baby Said to be Very Well, the Child Strong and Well Formed.". New York Times. August 15, 1912, Thursday.

Children:
Vincent Astor (1891-1959)
Ava Alice Muriel Astor
Parents: Edward Shippen Willing and Alice Arton

Biography: Ava Lowle Willing was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Edward Shippen Willing (?-1906) and his wife, the former Alice Barton.[2] She had two siblings, Susan Ridgway Willing (Mrs. Francis Cooper Lawrence, Jr.) and John Rhea Barton Willing. She was a descendant of Edward Shippen, the second mayor of Philadelphia and a chief justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.
She married John Jacob Astor IV in February 1891 in Philadelphia. The newlywed couple was given, among many lavish gifts, a furnished townhouse on Fifth Avenue in New York City. Though the marriage was tumultuous, the Astors had two children, William Vincent (b. Nov 15, 1891) and Ava Alice Muriel (b. February 1902). The latter child reportedly was the child of an affair Ava Astor had with a New York society figure surnamed Hatch.
On November 19 1909, Ava Astor sued her husband for divorce and March 5, 1910 the State of New York decreed in her favor.[3] Their son lived with his father before leaving to attend Harvard College. Their daughter would be raised by her mother. In the second year of Vincent's education, John Jacob became one of the RMS Titanic casualties while returning from his honeymoon with his new bride, Madeleine Talmadge Force. This event left young Vincent as one of the wealthiest men in the United States.
In 1911, Ava Astor and her daughter moved to England where she would become the second wife of Thomas Lister, 4th Baron Ribblesdale, in 1919. Lord Ribblesdale died on October 21 1925. Ava had no children from her second marriage, and she did not remarry. Though she reclaimed her American citizenship after returning to the United States and announced to the press that she would be known as Mrs. Ribblesdale, she nonetheless continued to be known by her former title.
Lady Ribblesdale died on June 9 1958 in New York City.[4] She left a token bequest to her son, Vincent, but the bulk of her estate was left to her

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[2] "Will of E. S. Willing. Son Gets Bulk of Estate. The Daughters $225,000 Each.". *New York Times*. April 27, 1906.
"The bulk of the $1,000,000 left by Edward S. Willing, who died at his residence, 510 South Broad Street, on April 10, is devised to his son, John R. Barton Willing, and his two daughters, Ava Lowle Willing Astor, wife of John Jacob Astor, and Susan Ridgway Willing Lawrence, widow of Francis Cooper Lawrence, Jr."
[4] "Would Probably Share $100,000,000 Estate with Stepmother in Event of His Father's Death.". *New York Times*. April 17, 1912.

daughter's four children: Prince Serge Obolensky, Princess Sylvia von Hoffmannsthal, Romana von Hoffmannsthal, and Emily Harding.

References:

"Lady Ribblesdale Dead. First Wife of John Jacob Astor IV. Mother of Vincent Astor.". *New York Times*. June 11, 1958.

AVA ALICE MURIEL ASTOR (1902-1956)

Ava Alice Muriel Astor (July 27, 1902 - July 19, 1956) was the daughter of John Jacob Astor IV and sister of Vincent Astor.

Born: July 27, 1902 in New York City

Died: July 19, 1956 in New York City

Religious beliefs: Episcopalian

Spouse and Children:

1. Prince Serge Obolensky, forer Czarist officer (married on 24 July 1924 in Royal Chapel of Savoy; divorced 1932)
   Son: Prince Ivan Sergeyevich Obolensky (*1925 iin London)
   Daughter: Sylvia Obolensky
2. Raimund von Hofmannsthal (married 21 Jan 1933 in Newark, NJ; divorced 1939)
   Daughter: Romana von Hofmannsthal
3. Philip Harding, British journalist (married 27 Mar 1940 in Faversham, England)
   Daughter: Emily Harding
4. David Pleydell-Bouverie, New York architect (married 12 May 1946 in Reading, VT

Parents:

John Jacob Astor IV (1864-1912) and Ava Lowle Willing (1868-1958)

Relatives:

Vincent Astor (1891-1959) brother

John Jacob Astor VI (1912-1992) half-brother

Early Life: Alice Astor was born on July 27, 1902 and was the only daughter of John Jacob Astor IV and Ava Lowle Willing. Her grandparents on her paternal side were Mr. and Mrs. William Astor of New York City.

Marriages: She married Prince Serge Obolensky in the Royal Chapel of Savoy on July 24, 1924. The marriage was considered the event of the season in England that year. Out of this marriage, a son, Prince Ivan Obolensky, was born in London in May 1925. The couple later had a daughter, Sylvia.

After their divorce, she married Raimund von Hofmannsthal, the son of Hugo von Hofmannsthal. The couple was married on January 21, 1933, in

the city court of Newark, New Jersey.[5] The couple divorced in 1939. Mr. von Hofmannsthal married Lady Elizabeth Puget later that year.
After her divorce, she married Philip Harding, a journalist. The wedding took place on March 27, 1940 in Faversham, England.[6] Out of this union, one daughter, Emily, was born. She later married Michael Zimmer, of New York City, an architect.
Finally, she married David Pleydell-Bouverie, grandson of William Pleydell-Bouverie, 5th Earl of Radnor. The couple were married May 12, 1946 in Reading, Vermont.[7] The couple resided in New York City and Glen Ellen, California, before eventually divorcing.
Death: Astor died of a stroke in her East Sixty-First Street apartment on July 19, 1956.[8] She was a great patron of the fine arts, including the ballet companies of London and New York City.
Her will was admitted to probate on November 5, 1956, in Manhattan Surrogate Court. Her assets, totaling $5,305,000, were to be divided among her four children.[9]

MADELEINE ASTOR (1893-1940)

Madeleine Force Astor (June 19, 1893 - March 27, 1940) was the wife of millionaire John Jacob Astor IV and the wealthiest woman on board the RMS *Titanic*.
Born: June 19, 1893, Brooklyn, New York
Died: March 27, 1940 (aged 46) in Palm Beach, Florida
Cause of death: Heart Ailment
Occupation: Socialite
Spouce(s):

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[5] "Astor Heiress Wed Quietly in Jersey. Princess Obolensky Becomes Bride of Raimund von Hof-mannsthal of Austria. Troth Not Announced. Ceremony Performed Saturday by Police Court Judge. Couple Left Immediately for Europe.". New York Times. January 24, 1933.
[6] "ASTOR HEIRESS WED TO PHILIP HARDING; Mrs. Alice von Hofmannsthal British Journalist's Bride.". New York Times. March 29, 1940.
[7] "MRS. ALICE HARDING IS WED IN VERMONT; Daughter of Lady Ribblesdale and Late Col. Astor Bride of David Pleydell-Bouverie.". New York Times. May 15, 1946.
[8] "Mrs. Pleydell-Bouverie Dies Here. Daughter of Col. John Jacob Astor. Heiress, a Patron of Ballet Companies, Was 54. Did War Work in Britain.". New York Times. July 20, 1956.
"Mrs. Alice Pleydell-Bouverie, the former Ava Alice Muriel Astor, a sister of Vincent Astor, died yesterday of a stroke at her home, 219 East Sixty-first Street. Her age was 54. She had a country home in Rhinebeck, N.Y."
[9] "LOST WILL DISPOSES OF $5,305,000 ESTATE.". New York Times. November 6, 1956.

John Jacob Astor IV (m. 1911-1912)
William Karl Dick (m. 1916-1933)
Enzo Fiermonte
Children: John Jacob Astor VI (1912-1990)
Parents: William Hurlbut Force and Katherine Arvilla Talmage
Early life: Madeleine Talmage Force was born on June 19, 1893 in Brooklyn, New York to William Hurlbut Force and Katherine Arvilla Talmage. She had a sister, Katherine Emmons Force.
She first met John Jacob Astor IV, one of the richest men in the United States, in Bar Harbor, Maine while she was still in school. On September 9, 1911 the eighteen-year-old Madeleine married the forty-seven year old John Jacob Astor in Beechwood, the Astor family's Newport, Rhode Island home.
Titanic: John Jacob Astor was one of the 1,500 people who died in the disaster, and his partially crushed body was recovered on April 22. Madeleine and the other survivors were rescued by the RMS *Carpathia* and afterwards Madeleine did not talk about the disaster except to mention her last memory of the sinking was seeing John Jacob Astor's pet Airedale, Kitty, pacing on the deck.
Post Titanic: Madeleine gave birth to John Jacob Astor VI, named after his father, on August 14, 1912. His half-brother, Vincent Astor, long maintained that his younger sibling was not a biological Astor.
According to John Jacob Astor's will, Madeleine would have received income from a $5,000,000 trust fund as long as she did not remarry.
Remarriages: Madeleine's first remarriage was on June 22, 1916, in Bar Harbor, Maine. She married her childhood friend and banker William Karl Dick (1888-1953), who at twenty-eight years old was vice president of the Manufacturers Trust Company of New York and a part owner and director of the *Brooklyn Times*. As stated in the will, Madeleine lost her stipend from the trust fund and the right to live in the Astor mansion in Manhattan. During the marriage she and Dick had two sons: William Karl Dick, Jr. and John Henry Dick. The marriage to Dick did not last and they divorced on July 21, 1933 in Reno, Nevada.
Just 4 months later on November 27, 1933 Madeleine married twenty-six-year-old Italian boxer Enzo Fiermonte in a civil ceremony in New York City. They divorced five years later on June 11, 1938 in West Palm Beach, Florida and Madeleine went back to using the surname Dick.
Death: Madeleine Astor died of a serious heart ailment in Palm Beach, Florida, in 1940 at the age of forty-six. She was buried in Trinity Church Cemetery in New York City.

External links

- Behe, George, Phillip Gowan, Hermann Söldner. "Mrs Madeleine Talmage Astor (nèe Force)". *Encyclopedia Titanica.*
- "Mrs. Fiermonte Dead in Florida". *The New York Times.* March 29, 1940.

VINCENT ASTOR (1891-1959)

William Vincent Astor was a businessman and philanthropist and a member of the prominent Astor family

Born: 15 November 1891 in NYC
Died: 3 February 1959 (aged 67 by a heart attack) in NYC (interred an Sleepy Hollow Cemetery)
Spouces:
1. Helen Dinsmore Huntington (married 1913-1940)
2. Mary (Minnie) Benedict Cushing (*27 Jan 1906 in Baltimore NY; †4 Nov 1978 in NYC) married on 27 Sep 1940 (until 1953); parents Dr. Harvey Williams Cushing and Katherine Stone Crowell
3. Mary Brooke Russell

Residences: NCY and Rhinebeck, NY
Occupation: Publisher (married 1953)
Religious beliefs: Episcopalian

Early life: Called Vincent, he was born in the Fifth Avenue mansion where his grandmother Caroline Astor reigned over American society. He was the son of John Jacob Astor IV, millionaire and inventor, and his first wife, Ava Lowle Willing, a famously beautiful and spoiled heiress from Philadelphia.
Childhood and inheritance: Vincent endured a difficult childhood. His vain mother was embarrassed by his resemblance to his father and would humiliate him in public. In addition his parents' marriage was less than perfect. Vincent's only sister, Ava Alice Muriel Astor, was reportedly Ava Astor's child by a New York society man named Sidney Hatch—though others argued her biological father was Ava's future second husband, Lord Ribblesdale—while Vincent's father, a friend wrote in a letter to her husband, had numerous affairs and morals shockingly loose for a warden of the Episcopal church. They divorced in 1909 and on September 9, 1911 Jack Astor married Madeleine Talmadge Force, an 18-year-old beauty a year younger than his son. In 1919, Ava married a recently widowed English nobleman, Thomas Lister, Baron Ribblesdale. While a student at Harvard University in 1912, Vincent inherited an estimated $200 million when his father went down with the *Titanic*. After his father's death, he quit college to manage his family's vast properties. Astor at the time was called "the richest boy in the world."[1]

[1] New York Times, February 2, 1959, page 1

Philanthropy: Vincent Astor was, according to Astor family biographer Derek Wilson, "a hitherto unknown phenomenon in America: an Astor with a highly developed social conscience." He was 20 when his father died and having inherited a massive fortune, Vincent Astor dropped out of Harvard University. He set about to change the family image from that of miserly, aloof slum landlords who enjoyed the good life at the expense of others. Over time, he sold off the family's New York City slum housing and reinvested in reputable enterprises while spending a great deal of time and energy helping others. He was responsible for the construction of a large housing complex in the Bronx that included sufficient land for a large children's playground, and in Harlem, he transformed a valuable piece of real estate into another playground for children.

Vincent Astor appeared as number 12 on the first list of America's richest people compiled by *Forbes Magazine*. His net worth at the time was estimated at $75 million.

Amongst his holdings was *Newsweek* magazine which had for a time its headquarters in the former Knickerbocker Hotel that had been built by Vincent Astor's father; he was the magazine's chairman. He also inherited Ferncliff, the Astor family's estate in Rhinebeck, New York, where his father had been born. However, Vincent Astor would be the last occupant of Ferncliff. On his death in 1959, Vincent Astor bequeathed the main house at Ferncliff to the Benedictine Hospital in Kingston, New York, and in 1964 his widow, Brooke, donated the remaining land to become Ferncliff Forest Game Refuge and Forest Preserve.

Marriages

1) Astor married Helen Dinsmore Huntington, in April 1913. At the ceremony, he was stricken with the mumps, a disease that made him sterile; as for the bride, her friend Glenway Wescott, the novelist, admiringly described her in his unpublished diaries as "a grand, old-fashioned lesbian."[2] At the outbreak of World War I, Vincent took advice from his friend and Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Franklin D. Roosevelt and joined the Navy. He served overseas with his wife, who did charity work with the YMCA in France. Vincent was promoted from an ensign to a lieutenant during the War. The couple divorced in 1940. A year later, Helen Astor became the second wife of Lytle Hull (-1958), a real-estate broker who was a friend and business associate of her former husband.

2) Shortly after his divorce, Astor married Mary Benedict Cushing, known as Minnie. She was a daughter of the prominent Baltimore surgeon, Dr. Harvey Cushing and sister of Babe Cushing Paley and Betsey Cushing Roosevelt Whitney. They divorced in September 1953, and the following

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[2] Glenway Wescott Collection, Beineke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut

month, Minnie Astor married James Whitney Fosburgh, a painter who worked as an art lecturer at the Frick Museum.
3) On 8 October 1953, several weeks after divorcing his second wife, Astor married the once-divorced, once-widowed Brooke Russell Marshall, whom he called Pookie. According to an oft-told story in society circles, Astor agreed to divorce his second wife only after she had found him a replacement spouse. Her first suggestion was Janet Newbold Ryan Stewart Bush, the newly divorced wife of James S. Bush, who turned Astor down with startling candor, saying, "I don't even like you."[3] Astor proceeded to tell her that he was not well and, though only in his early 60s, he couldn't be expected to live for very long, whereupon she would inherit his millions. At that, Janet Bush reportedly replied, "What if you do live?" Minnie Astor then proposed the recently widowed Brooke Marshall.[4] Together, Brooke and Vincent Astor developed the Vincent Astor Foundation, a foundation that was designed to give back to New York City.
Death: Vincent died on February 2, 1959, of a heart attack.[5] News of his death made the front page on most major newspapers in the United States, including the New York Times. (The death of Buddy Holly, who died in a plane crash the same day, was mentioned in an article on page 66.) Astor left all of his money to Brooke, surprising many. She continued his philanthropic work. Vincent Astor is interred in the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Sleepy Hollow, New York. He was the last person born into the American branch of the Astor family to rank amongst the richest individuals in the United States according to *People* magazine. John Jacob Astor VI, Vincent's half brother and with whom he had never been on good terms, contested Astor's will; John Jacob Astor VI lost the case.

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[3] www.newyorksocialdiary.com. Janet Newbold married (1) Allan A. Ryan Jr, (2) William Rhinelander Stewart, and (3) James S. Bush. Her third husband, to whom she was married from 1948 until 1952, was a brother of Senator Prescott S. Bush, an uncle of U.S. president George Herbert Walker Bush, and a great-uncle of U.S. president George W. Bush.
[4] www.newyorksocialdiary.com
[5] Mason City Globe-Gazette, February 3, 1959, page 1

Vincent Astor (1891-1959) and his 3rd wife Brooke (1902-2007)

BROOKE ASTOR (1902-2007)

Brooke Astor was an American philanthropist and socialite who was the chairwoman of the Vincent Astor Foundation, which had been established by her third husband, Vincent Astor, son of the first multi-millionaire John Jacob Astor IV. She was also a novelist and wrote two volumes of memoirs.

Born: Roberta Brooke Russell 30 March 1902 Portmouth, NH
Died: 13 August 2007 (aged 105) Briarcliff Manor, New York, NY
Occupation: Heiress, philanthropist
Spouse(s):
J. Dryden Kuser (1919-1930)
Charles H. Marshall (married 1932-1952)
Vincent Astor (m. 1953-1959)
Children: Anthony Dryden Marshall
Parents: John Henry Russell, Jr.
Relatives: John Henry Russell, grandfather
Early life: She was born Roberta Brooke Russell in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, the only child of John Henry Russell, Jr. (1872-1947), the 16th Commandant of the Marine Corps and his wife, née Mabel Cecile Hornby Howard (1879-1967). Her paternal grandfather was John Henry Russell, a rear admiral in the U.S. Navy. She was named for her maternal grandmother, Roberta Traill Brooke MacGill Howard and was known as Bobby to close friends and family.
Due to her father's career, she spent much of her childhood living in China, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and other places. Also, she briefly attended The Madeira School in 1919 but graduated from Holton-Arms.

Marriages

J. Dryden Kuser: She married her first husband, John Dryden Kuser (1897-1964), shortly after her seventeenth birthday, on 26 April 1919, in Washington, D.C. "I certainly wouldn't advise getting married that young to anyone," she said later in life. "At the age of sixteen, you're not jelled yet. The first thing you look at, you fall in love with."[1]
Her husband, the son of the financier and conservationist Col. Anthony Rudolph Kuser and grandson of U.S. Senator John F. Dryden, later became a New Jersey Republican councilman, assemblyman, and state senator.[2]

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[1] Klemesrud, Judy (1980-06-15). "*Brooke Astor: The Private Moments of a Public Benefactor; Married at 16.*". *The New York Times*.

[2] In 1927, Astor and Dryden Kuser lived in a New York City townhouse which they rented from Madeleine Talmadge Astor Dick (nèe Force) (Mrs. William K. Dick), the stepmother of Astor's eventual third husband.

"Worst years of my life"[3] was how Astor described her tumultuous first marriage, which was punctuated by her husband's alleged physical abuse, alcoholism and adultery. According to Frances Kiernan's 2007 biography of Brooke Astor, when Brooke was six months pregnant with the couple's only child, her husband broke her jaw during a marital fight.[4] "I learned about terrible manners from the family of my first husband," she told *The New York Times*. "'They didn't know how to treat people." [1] . A year after the marriage, according to a published account of the divorce proceedings, Dryden Kuser "began to embarrass her in social activities, ... told her that he no longer loved her and that their marriage was a failure."[5] Astor had one child with Dryden Kuser, Anthony Dryden Kuser, born in 1924.

In June 1929, Kuser insisted that his wife leave him. After waiting for the successful end to his New Jersey senatorial campaign, she filed for divorce on 15 February 1930, in Reno, Nevada. It was finalized later that year. [6],

Charles H. Marshall: Her second husband, whom she married in 1932, was Charles Henry "Buddy" Marshall (1891-1952). Marshall was the senior partner of the investment firm Butler, Herrick & Marshall, a brother-in-law of the mercantile heir Marshall Field III, and a descendant of James Lenox, the founder of the Lenox Library.

Astor later wrote that the marriage was "a great love match."[7]

She had two stepchildren by the marriage, Peter Marshall and Helen Huntington Marshall.[8]

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[3] Klemesrud, Judy (1980-06-15). "*Brooke Astor: The Private Moments of a Public Benefactor; Married at 16.*". *The New York Times*.

[4] Schillinger, Liesl (2007-06-17). "*Astor's Place*". *The New York Times*.

[5] 2007-07-21. "The lady in question, who celebrated her 105th birthday on March 30 at Holly Hill, her Westchester estate, is worth knowing better, as Frances Kiernan's guardedly admiring biography, "The Last Mrs. Astor," proves. Until last summer, most people thought of Brooke Astor as the dapper, aged socialite whose face so often popped up in society photos in The New York Times. They also knew her as the widow of Vincent Astor (her third and final husband), and, through the Vincent Astor Foundation, a great benefactress of many New York cultural and charitable institutions."

[6] "*Mrs. Kuser Files Suit; Gets Custody of Son. Wife of New Jersey Senator in Reno Court Relinquishes Her Dower Rights.*". *The New York Times*. 16 February 1930.

[7] Klemesrud, Judy (1980-06-15). "*Brooke Astor: The Private Moments of a Public Benefactor; Married at 16.*". *The New York Times*.

[8] On 6 September 1930, in Virginia City, Nevada, Dryden Kuser married, as his second wife, Vieva Marie Fisher Banks (formerly Mrs. James Lenox Banks, Jr.). They had one daughter, Suzanne Dryden Kuser, and divorced in October 1935. A week later, Sen. Kuser married Louise Mattei Farry (formerly Mrs. Joseph Farry). In 1958 he married, as his fourth wife, Grace Egglesfield Gibbons (widow of John J. Gibbons). An amateur ornithologist and president of the New Jersey Audubon Society, Sen. Kuser introduced the bill that made the Eastern Goldfinch the state bird of New Jersey. He also was, at various

BROOKE ASTOR (1902-2007)

Brooke Astor was an American philanthropist and socialite who was the chairwoman of the Vincent Astor Foundation, which had been established by her third husband, Vincent Astor, son of the first multi-millionaire John Jacob Astor IV. She was also a novelist and wrote two volumes of memoirs.

Born: Roberta Brooke Russell 30 March 1902 Portmouth, NH
Died: 13 August 2007 (aged 105) Briarcliff Manor, New York, NY
Occupation: Heiress, philanthropist
Spouse(s):
J. Dryden Kuser (1919-1930)
Charles H. Marshall (married 1932-1952)
Vincent Astor (m. 1953-1959)
Children: Anthony Dryden Marshall
Parents: John Henry Russell, Jr.
Relatives: John Henry Russell, grandfather
Early life: She was born Roberta Brooke Russell in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, the only child of John Henry Russell, Jr. (1872-1947), the 16th Commandant of the Marine Corps and his wife, née Mabel Cecile Hornby Howard (1879-1967). Her paternal grandfather was John Henry Russell, a rear admiral in the U.S. Navy. She was named for her maternal grandmother, Roberta Traill Brooke MacGill Howard and was known as Bobby to close friends and family.
Due to her father's career, she spent much of her childhood living in China, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and other places. Also, she briefly attended The Madeira School in 1919 but graduated from Holton-Arms.

Marriages

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Her husband, the son of the financier and conservationist Col. Anthony Rudolph Kuser and grandson of U.S. Senator John F. Dryden, later became a New Jersey Republican councilman, assemblyman, and state senator.[2]

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[5] 2007-07-21. "The lady in question, who celebrated her 105th birthday on March 30 at Holly Hill, her Westchester estate, is worth knowing better, as Frances Kiernan's guardedly admiring biography, "The Last Mrs. Astor," proves. Until last summer, most people thought of Brooke Astor as the dapper, aged socialite whose face so often popped up in society photos in The New York Times. They also knew her as the widow of Vincent Astor (her third and final husband), and, through the Vincent Astor Foundation, a great benefactress of many New York cultural and charitable institutions."

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In 1942, Anthony Dryden Kuser, then 18 years old, changed his name to Anthony Dryden Marshall. It is unclear whether or not he was formally adopted by his stepfather.

Her husband's financial fortunes turned in the mid 1940s, at which time Brooke Marshall went to work for eight years as a features editor at *House & Garden* magazine. She also briefly worked for Ruby Ross Wood, a prominent New York interior decorator who, with her associate Billy Baldwin, decorated the Marshalls' apartment at 1 Gracie Square in New York City.[9]

Vincent Astor: In 1953, eleven months after Charles Marshall's death, she married her third and final husband, Vincent Astor (1891-1959), the chairman of the board of *Newsweek* magazine and the last notably rich American member of the famous Astor family. The oldest son of *Titanic* victim John Jacob Astor IV (1864-1912) and his first wife, Ava Lowle Willing, he had been married and divorced twice before and was known to have a difficult personality.

"He had a dreadful childhood, and as a result, had moments of deep melancholy," Astor recalled. "But I think I made him happy. That's what I set out to do. I'd literally dance with the dogs, sing and play the piano, and I would make him laugh, something no one had ever done before. Because of his money, Vincent was very suspicious of people. That's what I tried to cure him of."[10]

According to an oft-told story in society circles, Astor agreed to divorce his second wife, Minnie, only after she had found him a replacement spouse. After first suggesting Janet Newbold Ryan Stewart Bush, the newly divorced wife of James S. Bush, who turned down Astor's proposal with startling candor – "I don't even like you," she reportedly said – Minnie Astor suggested the recently widowed Brooke Marshall.[11] Whatever the circumstances, few people believed that the Astor-Marshall union was anything more than a financial transaction. As Brooke Astor's friend the novelist Louis Auchincloss said, "Of course she married Vincent for the

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times, an insurance and real estate broker in New Jersey (1937-1942) and Nevada (1942-1955), a vice president of Lenox, Inc., the pottery and china company, a columnist for the Nevada State Journal (1943-1947), and a director of the Fox Film Corporation.

[9] Helen Marshall married firstly the composer Ernest Schelling (Gray, Christopher (1998-07-12). "*Streetscapes: 863 Park Avenue; One of the Oldest Luxury Apartment Houses on Park*". *The New York Times*.

[10] Klemesrud, Judy (1980-06-15). "*Brooke Astor: The Private Moments of a Public Benefactor; Married at 16.*". *The New York Times*.

[11] 2007-08-28. and, secondly, the cellist János Scholz (Pace, Eric (1993-06-06). "Janos Scholz, 89, Cellist, Scholar And Morgan Library Benefactor". *The New York Times*. 2008-03-23.

money," adding, "I wouldn't respect her if she hadn't. Only a twisted person would have married him for love." [12]

During her brief marriage to Astor, whom she called "Captain," Astor participated in his real-estate and hotel empire and his philanthropic endeavors. Between 1954 and 1958, she redecorated one of his properties, the Hotel St. Regis, which had been built by his father.

Though she received several proposals after Astor's death, she chose not to remarry. "I'd have to marry a man of a suitable age and somebody who was a somebody, and that's not easy. Frankly, I think I'm unmarriageable now," Astor said in an interview in 1980, when she was 78. "I'm too used to having things my way. But I still enjoy a flirt now and then."[13]

Philanthropy: Though she was appointed a member of the board of the Astor Foundation soon after her marriage, upon Vincent Astor's death in 1959, she took charge of all the philanthropies to which he left his fortune. Despite liquidating the Vincent Astor Foundation in 1997, she continued to be active in charities and in New York's social life. The New York Public Library was always one of Astor's favorite charities. As a result of her charity work, Astor was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. Her life's motto summed up her prodigious generosity: "Money is like manure; it's not worth a thing unless it's spread around." [14], [15]

Among numerous other organizations, she was involved with Lighthouse for the Blind, the Maternity Center Association, the Astor Home for emotionally disturbed children, the International Rescue Committee, the Fresh Air Fund, and the Women's Auxiliary Board of the Society of New York Hospital.

Elder abuse controversy: On July 26, 2006, the *New York Daily News* ran a front-page cover story on the family feud between Astor's son, Anthony Dryden Marshall, and her grandson Philip Cryan Marshall, regarding the welfare of the centenarian Astor, then 104 years old.

The story detailed how Astor's grandson, a historic preservationist and associate professor at Roger Williams University, had filed a lawsuit

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[12] Schillinger, Liesl (2007-06-17). "*Astor's Place*". *The New York Times*.

[13] Klemesrud, Judy (1980-06-15). "*Brooke Astor: The Private Moments of a Public Benefactor; Married at 16.*". *The New York Times*.

[14] Astor's association with *House & Garden* has been established by a contemporary issue of the magazine, which shows "Mrs. Charles H. Marshall of Ruby Ross Wood, Inc." in the design firm's office. The gossip columnist Cindy Adams stated on 28 July 2006 that Astor was fired from her position at *House & Garden* and also worked briefly as a secretary to the American decorator Dorothy Draper.

[15] www.newyorksocialdiary.com. Janet Newbold married (1) Allan A. Ryan Jr, (2) William Rhinelander Stewart, and (3) James S. Bush. Her third husband, to whom she was married from 1948 until 1952, was a brother of Senator Prescott S. Bush, an uncle of U.S. president George Herbert Walker Bush, and a great-uncle of U.S. president George W. Bush.

seeking the removal of his father as the socialite's guardian and the appointment of Annette de la Renta, the wife of designer Oscar de la Renta, instead.

According to accounts published in *The New York Times* and the *New York Daily News*, Astor was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease and suffered from anemia, among other ailments. The lawsuit alleged that Marshall had not provided for his elderly mother and, instead, had allowed her to live in squalor and that he had cut back on necessary medication and doctor's visits, while enriching himself with income from her estate. Philip Marshall further charged that his father sold his grandmother's favorite Childe Hassam painting in 2002 without her knowledge and with no record as to the whereabouts of the funds received from the sale. In addition to Annette de la Renta, Henry Kissinger and David Rockefeller provided affidavits supporting Philip Marshall's requests for a change in guardianship.

The day the story appeared, New York Supreme Court Justice John Stackhouse sealed the documents pertaining to the lawsuit and granted an order appointing Annette de la Renta guardian and JPMorgan Chase & Co. to be in charge of Astor's finances. Several news organizations including Associated Press and The New York Times sued to have the records of the Astor case unsealed in the public interest, and they were on 1 September 2006.[16] Astor was moved to Lenox Hill Hospital, where an unidentified nurse called her appearance "deplorable"; according to the *New York Daily News*, Anthony Marshall unsuccessfully attempted to have his mother transferred to another hospital.

Astor was released from Lenox Hill Hospital on 29 July 2006 and moved to Holly Hill, her 75-acre (300,000 m^2) estate in the village of Briarcliff Manor, New York.

In 2008, a book, titled *Mrs. Astor Regrets,* by Meryl Gordon,makes use of diaries kept by the nurses who cared for Astor during the last years of her life. The diaries were compiled over the four years Astor received care, and detail the abuse that Mrs. Astor reportedly received from her son, Anthony (Tony).[17]

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[16] Berger, Marilyn (2007-08-13). "*Brooke Astor, New York's First Lady of Philanthropy, Dies at 105.*". *The New York Times*.

[17] Astor's association with *House & Garden* has been established by a contemporary issue of the magazine, which shows "Mrs. Charles H. Marshall of Ruby Ross Wood, Inc." in the design firm's office. The gossip columnist Cindy Adams stated on 28 July 2006 that Astor was fired from her position at *House & Garden* and also worked briefly as a secretary to the American decorator Dorothy Draper.

http://www.google.com/gwt/n?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.nytimes.com%2F2007%2F08%2F13%2Fobituaries%2F13cnd-astor.html. Retrieved on 2007-08-13. "Brooke Astor...died yesterday afternoon at her weekend estate, Holly Hill, in Briarcliff Manor, New York. She was 105."

Estate tampering: On 1 August 2006, *The New York Times* reported that Anthony Marshall was accused by Alice Perdue, who was employed in his mother's business office, of diverting nearly $1 million from his ailing mother's personal checking accounts into theatrical productions. Marshall, through a spokesman, said that Astor knew of the investments and approved of them. Perdue countered that Marshall had advised her never to send to his mother any documents of a financial nature because "she didn't understand it."

On August 8, William F. Buckley Jr., who also lived at 778 Park Avenue (see External links), wrote about the ordeal in his syndicated column.

The claims made by Phillip Marshall regarding his father's handling of the estate prompted interest into the matter. On 27 November 2007, indictments on criminal charges were announced against Astor's son, Anthony D. Marshall, and attorney Francis X. Morrissey Jr. The charges stemmed from the district attorney's office and subsequent grand jury investigation into the mishandling of Astor's money and a questionable signature on the third amendment to her 2002 will, made in March 2004.[13] That amendment called for Astor's real estate to be sold and the proceeds added to her residuary estate. An earlier amendment, also made in 2004, which designated Marshall as the executor of his mother's estate and left him the entirety of the residuary estate, was also under investigation.[18]

The specific charges included grand larceny, criminal possession of stolen property, forgery, scheming to defraud, falsifying business records, offering a false instrument for filing, and conspiracy[19] in plundering her $198 million estate. The most severe charge, grand larceny, carries up to a 25 year sentence.[20]

The trial of Marshall and Morrissey started March 30, 2009, with the jury selection. According to the judge, Justice A. Kirke Bartley Jr., the trial could last up to three months.[21]

Death: Astor died on August 13 , 2007 at the age of 105 from pneumonia at her home in Briarcliff Manor, New York.

Abb.: The grave of Brooke Astor in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery

One of Astor's death notices in the *Times*, a paid notice from The Rockefeller University, ended with these lines:

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[18] "*New York Day by Day. 2 Honors for Brooke Astor.*". *The New York Times*: p. B3. 1985-05-02. "It was a big day for Brooke Astor yesterday. At lunch, she received the Frederick Law Olmsted Award for being wonderful to Central Park. At cocktails, she received the Governor's Arts Award for being wonderful to New York. The Olmsted Award, named after one of the architects of Central Park, is the annual excuse for about 700 New York movers, shakers and climbers to mingle in the park, which benefits from the lunch."

[19] "Astor Painting Becomes Focus of Courtroom Battle" New York Times, 1 Sep 2006

[20] "Astor Painting Becomes Focus of Courtroom Battle" New York Times, 1 Sep 2006

[21] *The Daily Beast* "The Baby Monitor Diaries." Mason, Christopher. Nov. 17,2008.

"And if you should survive to 105,
Look at all you'll derive out of being alive.
Then here is the best part,
You'll have a head start,
If you are among the very young at heart."[22]

Among the organizations who lamented her death included the New York Public Library, New York University, the New York Regional Association of Grantmakers, the New York Botanical Garden, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, WNET-TV, Historic Hudson Valley, The Juilliard School, the New York Landmarks Conservatory, the Wildlife Conservation Society, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Carnegie Hall, the Morris-Juemel Mansion Museum, the Citizens' Committee for New York City, the Rockefeller University, the Animal Medical Center, the Merchant's House Museum, the Library of America, the Pierpont Morgan Library, the Lotos Club, Lenox Hill Neighborhood House and the Brooklyn Stained Glass Conservation Center.

She is interred in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Sleepy Hollow, New York. The epitaph on her gravestone, chosen by her, simply reads: "I had a wonderful life".[23]

External links

- Detailed description of Mrs. Astor's 14 room duplex at Rosario Candela's 778 Park Avenue including the oft-photographed Albert Hadley library. Sales offering as of February 2009 and NYTimes Article 6FEB09
- Brooke Astor at Find A Grave
- Steve Fishman, "Mrs. Astor's Baby: The Fight for A Mother's Love, And Money", New York Magazine, 12 November 2007

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- Astor, Brooke (1965). *The Bluebird is at Home*. New York: Random House. ISBN 0679426876.
- Astor, Brooke (1980). *Footprints*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday. ISBN 038514377X.
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In fiction: Brooke Astor is portrayed as the heroine, Jane Merle, of the romantic comedy "Night and Silence: Who is Here?" by British novelist Pamela Hansford Johnson.

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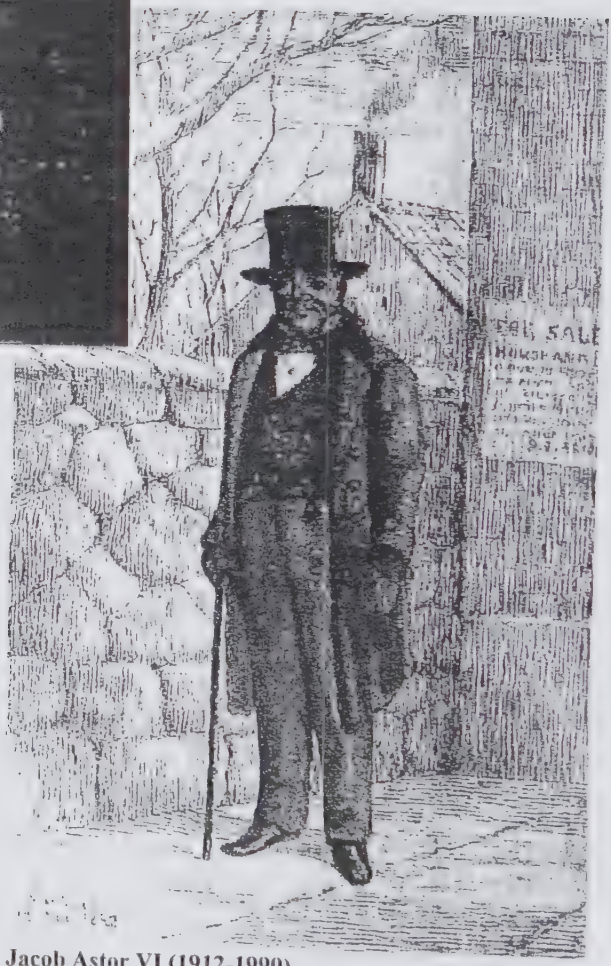
[22] Kovaleski, Serge F. *Son of Astor Is Said to Face Criminal Case. The New York Times.* 27 November 2007. Access date: 27 November 2007.

[23] *Brooke Astor's son accused of plundering estate.* MSNBC.com. 27 November 2007.



John Jacob Astor VI (1912-1990)
The drawing of 12 Nov 1847 is supposed to show Colonel John Jacob Astor, but Colonel John Jacob III (1822-1890) was at the time 25 years old – shown is probably his father William B. Astor (1792-1875)

JOHN JACOB ASTOR VI (1912-1992)

John Jacob Astor VI was a member of the Astor family. He was born four months after the sinking of the Titanic. His mother Madeleine Astor was pregnant with him as his father John Jacob Astor IV helped her aboard a lifeboat while he was left behind.

Born: 14 August 1912 in New York City
Died: 26 June 1992 at age 79 in Miami Beach, FL (interred with his parents at Trinity Church Cemetery NYC)
Religious beliefs: Episcopalian
Spouses and Children:

1. Ellen Tuck French, married on 30 June 1934 at Trinity Church NY, divorced in 1943
   Son William Backhouse Astor (*1935), married Charlotte Fisk, two children: William Backhouse Astor, Jr. (*1959) and Caroline Fisk
2. Gertrude Gretsch, married on 18 Sep 1944[1] in NYC; divorced 1954
   Daughter Mary Jaqueline Astor (*1949, Mrs John Nicholas Drexel)
3. Dolores Margaret Fullman (*1929), married 6 Aug 1954
4. Sue Sandford

Parents:
John Jacob Astor IV (1864-1912)
Madeleine Talmadge Force (1893-1940)
Relatives: Vincent Astor (1891-1959) half-brother

Early Life: He was the posthumous son of John Jacob Astor IV (1864-1912) and his second wife, Madeleine Talmadge Force (1893-1940). His father died when the RMS *Titanic* sank on April 15, 1912. His parents had married on September 9, 1911 and were returning home aboard the ship after about three months honeymooning in Egypt and Europe. Madeleine Astor was five months pregnant when her husband put her in one of Titanic's lifeboats; she was rescued eight hours after her husband went down with the ship.
Under the terms of her husband's will, Madeleine Astor received very little from an estate estimated to be as much as $100 million. Provided she did not remarry, 19-year-old widow received the annual investment income from a five-million-dollar trust fund and the use of her late husband's homes on Fifth Avenue in New York City and in Newport, Rhode Island. Because they were on their way home, and Mrs. Astor had conceived

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[1] "J. J. Astor Marries Gertrude Gretsch; Son of the Late Colonel John Jacob Astor Weds Alumna of Finch at Her Home .". New York Times. September 19, 1944.

during their honeymoon abroad, no provision for the unborn child had yet been made. However, their son, known as Jakey, received $3 million dollars when he reached the age of 21, presumably pursuant to statutory laws making provision for predetermined children. The rest of his father's estate was left to Jakey's elder half-brother, Vincent Astor.
His stepfathers were William K. Dick and Enzo Fiermonte.
John Jacob Astor VI graduated from St. George's School in Newport, RI
Marriages: Astor was originally engaged to Eileen S. S. Gillespie, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Lewis Gillespie of New York City and Newport, RI in December 1933.[2] However, the engagement was broken off in January 1934 for unspecified reasons.
He married Ellen Tuck French at Trinity Church in Manhattan on June 30, 1934.[3] The couple was divorced in 1943; they had one child, William Backhouse Astor III.[4]
Astor then married Gertrude Gretsch, daughter of Walter Gretsch, but their marriage ended in divorce in 1954, though the Mexican divorce was ruled invalid in 1956. An American divorce soon followed.[5] Gertrude Astor married, as her second husband, in 1961, Sonio Coletti-Perucca.
He married a third time to Dolores Margaret Fullman (born 1929) on 6 August 1954; they separated soon after returning from their honeymoon and divorced.[6]
His fourth wife was Sue Sandford; she predeceased him, circa 1985.
Name confusion: *Note:* Standard genealogies of the Astor family confuse this man John Jacob Astor VI, with John Jacob Astor, 1st Baron Astor of Hever (born 1886) John Jacob Astor V. Sir John Jacob Astor (born 1918), youngest brother of David Astor, is John Jacob Astor VII, and the 3rd Baron Astor of Hever is John Jacob Astor VIII. John Jacob Astor V is also sometimes referred to as John Jacob Astor III.
References in popular culture: Astor's name is shown on one of the page buttons on an apartment building in Mel Brooks' 2005 movie musical *The Producers*.

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[2] "JOHN JACOB ASTOR TO WED DEBUTANTE; His Engagement to Miss Eileen S. S. Gillespie Announced by Her Parents. CAME OF AGE IN AUGUST Fiancee, Noted in Newport as a Tennis Player, Is From an Old American Family.". New York Times. December 16.
[3] "MOTHER OF ASTOR TO ATTEND BRIDAL; Despite Illness, Mrs. Fiermonte Goes Alone to Newport for Marriage to Miss French. FORMER HUSBAND A GUEST W. K. Dick to Be in Trinity Church Today -- Rehearsal for the Ceremony Takes Place.". New York Times. June 30, 1934.
[4] "Mrs. John Jacob Astor 3d In Reno to Seek Divorce.". New York Times. April 9, 1943.
[5] "Astor Seeking Divorce; John J. Files Suit in Mexico Against Second Wife.". New York Times. July 3, 1954.
[6] "John Jacob Astor Ousted from Social Register", Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 27 Nov 1954

ASTOR GRAVES

The following members of the Astor-Family are interred in Trinity Church Cemetery and Mausoleum at Broadway and 153rd Street in Manhattan. Not all names could be traced and some of the dates seem to be wrong, since the do not match similar dates given in newspapers or diaries. Best example is Nr. 14, whose date of death is erroneously listed as 3/28/1848.

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ASTOR PLOTS/VAULTS TRINITY CHURCH [1] CEMETERY [2]

Information taken from plot/vault files.
(List received from Trinity Church Archives[3] Nov 18, 2008)

#743-786 W.D. Purchased by John Jacob Astor III in 1867 (plot)

(01) **12/27/1881 John R. Astor, 30 days old** [4]

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[1] **Trinity Church:** In 1696, Governor Benjamin Fletcher approved the purchase of land in Lower Manhattan by the Church of England community for construction of a new church. The parish received its charter from King William III of England on May 6, 1697. Its land grant specified an annual rent of sixty bushels of wheat. The present Trinity Church, is considered a classic example of Gothic Revival architecture and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1976 for its architectural significance and place within the history of New York City.When the church was consecrated on Ascension Day May 1, 1846. On July 9, 1976, the church was visited by Queen Elizabeth II, where she was presented with a symbolic "back rent" of 279 peppercorns.

[2] **Trinity Church Cemetery** consists of three separate burial grounds associated with Trinity Church in Manhattan. The first was established in the Churchyard located at 74 Trinity Place at Wall Street and Broadway. In 1842, the church, running out of space in its churchyard, established Trinity Church Cemetery and Mausoleum in Upper Manhattan between Broadway and Riverside Drive, at the Chapel of the Intercession (now The Church of the Intercession) formerly the location of John James Audubon's estate. A third burial place is the Churchyard of St. Paul's Chapel. The burial grounds have been the final resting place for many historic figures since the Churchyard cemetery opened in 1697. A non-denominational cemetery, it is listed in the US National Register of Historic Places and is the only remaining active cemetery in Manhattan. There are two bronze plaques at the Church of the Intercession cemetery commemorating the Battle of Fort Washington, which included some of the fiercest fighting of the Revolutionary War.

[2] Yolanda Rivera, Manager, Trinity Church Cemetery & Mausoleum, 770 Riverside Drive, NYC, Tel 212-368-1600, Fax 212-491-4576 (yrivera@trinitywallstreet.org)

[3] Trinity Church Archives, 74 Trinity Place, NYC (212-602-9687)

(02) 12/12/1887 **Charlotte Augusta Astor, 62 years, Wife of JJ III** [5]
(03) 04/15/1889 **Stillborn female child of W.W. and Mary Astor** [6]
(04) 02/22/1890 **JJ III, 68 years old** [7]
(05) 12/22/1894 **Mary P. Astor, 36 years old** [8]

#791 A & B, William B. Astor Vault (vault)

Removed from St. Thomas' Church [9] 6/20/1851

(06) 07/05/1825 **Robert Astor** [10]
(07) 09/13/1829 **Christiana E. Bache** [11]
(08) 06/18/1839 **John Armstrong** [12]
(09) 04/23/1833 **Henry Astor** [13]

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[4] **John Rudolph Astor** (*11/28/1871, †12/27/1881), son of William Waldorf Astor, 1st Viscount (*03/31/1848 in NYC, †10/18/1919 in Brighton/England; son of John Jacob Astor III) and Mary Dahlgreen Paul (*1858 Philadelphia, †12/22/1894 NYC)

[5] **Charlotte Augusta Astor** (*1825, †12/12/1887 in NYC, daughter of Thomas Stanyarne Gibbes of South Carolina) married 07/06/1878 John Jacob Astor III (1822-1890); (Memorial # 6104411)

[6] **Stillborn female child** (†1889), daughter of William Waldorf Astor, 1st Viscount (*03/31/1848 NYC, †10/18/1919 in Brighton/England; son of John Jacob Astor III) and Mary Dahlgreen Paul (1858-1894)

[7] **John Jacob Astor III.** (*06/10/1822 NCY, †02/22/1892 NCY, son of William Backhouse Astor 1792-1875) married Dec. 1846 Charlotte Augusta Gibbes (1822-1887)

[8] **Mary Dahlgreen Paul Astor** (*ß7/04/1856 Philadelphia, daughter of James W. Paul; †12/22/1894) married 06/06/1878 in Philadelphia William Waldorf Astor (1848-1919)

[9] **Saint Thomas Church**, located at the corner of 53rd Street and Fifth Avenue in Manhattan is an Episcopal parish church of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. It is also known as **Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue** or as **Saint Thomas Church in the City of New York** and was incorporated on 9 January 1824. The current structure, completed in 1914, is the fourth church built to house this congregation and was designed by the architects Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue in the French High Gothic style. On 12 October 1823, members of three Episcopalian parishes in Lower Manhattan, including notably **William Backhouse Astor** (1792-1875), a wealthy Manhattan landowner, Charles King (1789-1867), later president of Columbia University, and jurist William Beach-Lawrence, combined forces to organize a new episcopal church in New York. Saint Thomas Church was incorporated on 9 January 1824. With the cornerstone laid in July 1824 at the corner of Broadway and Houston Street, the first church edifice opened in 1826. The location was the northern extent of developed settlement in Manhattan during the early 19th Century. Though enlarged and remodeled in 1844 to accommodate a growing congregation, this structure was destroyed by fire on 2 March 1851. The church immediately rebuilt at this location, opening in 1852. Removal of graves in June 1851 was caused by the need of land fort he new church.

[10] **Robert Astor** (07/05/1925)

[11] **Christina E. Bache** (09/13/1829)

[12] **John Armstrong** (06/18/1893)

(10) **07/09/1833 Dorothia Astor** [14]
(11) **09/29/1833 William Cooper Bache** [15]
(12) **09/18/1833 Sarah Astor** [16]
(13) **09/09/1834 Benjamin Astor** [17]
(14) **03/28/1848 John Jacob Astor** [18]
(15) **02/18/1841 Emily Astor Ward & Infant** [19]
(16) **03/24/1849 Ann K. Astor** [20]
(17) **04/14/1849 William H. Astor** [21]

Additional Interments:

(18) **01/16/1868 John Jacob Astor** [22]
(19) **04/11/1868 James K. Armstrong** [23]
(20) **02/15/1872 Margaret P. Astor** [24]
(21) **11/24/1875 William B. Astor** [25]
(22) **12/13/1875 Margaret A. Chanler** [26] (removed to 279A WD 3/10/1877)

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[13] **Henry (Johann Heinrich) Astor** (*01/09/1754 Walldorf/Germany, †04/23/1933 NYC; elder brother of John Jacob Astor I.) left Germany ca. 1775, had a butcher's shop in NYC in 1777; married 1783/84 Dorothea Pessinger

[14] **Dorothea Astor** (†09/07/1833, daughter of butcher John Pessinger) wife of Henry Astor (1754-1833)

[15] **William Cooper Bache** (09/29/1833)

[16] **Sarah Astor** (*1762 NYC, †09/18/1833 NYC, daughter of Adam Todd and Sarah Cox) married 09/19/1785 John Jacob Astor I. (1763-1848)

[17] **Benjamin Astor** (†09/09/1834)

[18] **John Jacob Astor** [I.], (*07/17/1763 in Walldorf/Palatinate, Germany, †03/29/1848 in NYC (son of Johann Jacob Astor, *07/07/1724 in Walldorf, †04/18/1816 in Walldorf, and Maria Magdalena vom Berg, *07/20/1730 in Ittlingen, †05/01/1764 in Walldorf) married 09/19/1785 Sarah Todd (†09/18/1833 NYC; daughter of Adam Todd and Sarah Cox)

[19] **Emily Astor Ward & Infant** (*1819, †02/19/1841) daughter of William Backhouse Astor (1792-1875) and Margarete Rebecca Armstrong (*1800 Albany, †1872 NYC)

[20] **Ann K. Astor** (†03/24/1849)

[21] **William Henry Astor** (†04/14/1849) Son of George Astor (1752-1813), Nephew of John Jacob Astor I (1663-1848), was still in 1811 in London; worked later for Astor in NYC

[22] **John Jacob Astor II.** (*1791 in NYC, †01/16/1868 in NYC) unmarried eldest son of John Jacob Astor I. (1763-1848)

[23] **James K. Armstrong** (†04/11/1868)

[24] **Margaret P. Astor** (†02/15/1872); probably Margaret Rebecca Armstrong (*1800 Philadelphia, †1872 NYC) married 05/20/1818 in Red Hook, NY to William Backhouse Astor (*09/19/1792 NYC, †11/24/1875 NYC)

[25] **William Backhouse Astor** (*09/19/1792 NYC, †11/24/1875 NYC, second son and heir of John Jacob Astor I.) married 05/20/1818 in Red Hook, NY Margaret Rebecca Armstrong (*1800 Albany, †1872 NYC)

[26] **Margaret Astor Chanler** (*1838, †12/13/1875) daughter of Emily Astor (1819-1841) and Sam Ward Jr (*1/27/1814 NYC), granddaughter of William Backhouse Astor (1792-

Moved from St. Luke's [27] Churchyard, 5/31/1882:

(23) **Sarah Astor** [28]
(24) **Magdalena Bristed** [29]
(25) **Sarah H. Bentzon** [30]
(26) **John J. Bentzon** [31]

#827-839 WD, purchased by William Astor 10/5/1876 (above ground vault)

(27) **11/21/1892 Emily Van Allen** [32]
(28) **04/25/1892 William Astor** [33]
(29) **09/25/1896 male child of JJ and AW** [34]
(30) **10/30/1908 Caroline W. Astor** [35]
(31) **04/15/1912 John Jacob Astor** [36]

1875) and Margaret Rebecca Armstrong (*1800 Albany, †1872 NYC) married to John Winthrop Chanler (1800-1872)

[27] **St. Luke:** On October 22, 1820 St. Luke was organized in recognition of the village's role as a refuge from the yellow fever epidemics that plagued New York City during the summers. In 1821, the cornerstone to the church was laid on a site on Hudson Street donated by Trinity Church. The new church was consecrated on Ascension Day, May 16, 1822. In 1891, St. Luke's became a chapel of Trinity Church. In 1976 St. Luke's again became an independent parish of the Episcopal Church.

[28] perhaps **Sarah Astor** (died as infant 1832) youngest daughter of William Backhouse Astor (1792-1875) and Margaret Rebecca Armstrong (1800-1872)

[29] **Magdalen Bristed** (1788-1832) eldest daughter of John Jacob Astor I (1763-1848) married to Adrian Bentzon; second marriage to John Bristed

[30] **Sarah H. Bentzon,** infant daughter of Magdalen Astor (1788-1831, oldest daughter of John Jacob Astor I.) and Adrian Bentson

[31] **John Jacob Astor Bentzon**, infant son of Magdalen Astor (1788-1831) oldest daughter of John Jacob Astor I. and Adrian Bentson

[32] **Emily Van Alen** (†11/21/1892) daughter of Emily Astor (1854-1881, daughter of William Backhouse Astor, Jr , 1830-1892) and James J. Van Alen (xxxx) married 03/14/1875.

[33] **William Backhouse Astor, Jr** (*1830, †04/25/1892, son of William Backhoouse Astor (1792-1875) and Margaret Rebecca Armstrong (1880-1872) married 09/20/1853 Caroline Webster Schermerhorn (1830-1908)

[34] **male child** (†09/25/1896) son of John Jacob Astor IV. (1864-1912) and Ava Lowle Willing

[35] **Caroline Webster (Schermerhorn) Astor** (*09/22/1830, †10/30/1908) married 09/20/1853 William Backhouse Astor, Jr. (1830-1892)

[36] **John Jacob Astor IV.** (*06/13/1864 Rhinebeck, NY, †04/15/1912, drowned on the "Titanic"; son of William Backhouse Astor, Jr. (1830-1892) and Caroline Webster Schermerhorn (*09/22/1830, †10/30/1908) married 02/17/1891 Ava Lowle Willing (2 children: William Vincent Astor (*11/15/1891, †02/03/1959) and Ava Alice Muriel 1902-1956) divorce 1909; married 09/09/1911 Madeleine Talmadge Force (*06/19/1893 Brooklyn, †03/27/1940 Palm Beach, FL) son: John Jacob Astor VI (1912-1992).

(32) **05/09/1959** Mary Van Alen Thompson [37](ashes)

#11 Parish Ground (above ground vault)

(33) **08/13/1939** Katherine Talmadge Force [38]
(34) **03/27/1940** Madeleine Talmadge Dick [39]
(wife of JJ Astor IV, who died on the "Titanic")
(35) **02/15/1989** Sue Astor [40]
(36) **02/17/1992** Buddy Astor [41]
(37) **06/26/1992** John Jacob Astor (5th) [42]

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[36] **John Jacob Astor IV.** (*06/13/1864 Rhinebeck, NY, †04/15/1912, drowned on the "Titanic"; son of William Backhouse Astor, Jr. (1830-1892) and Caroline Webster Schermerhorn (*09/22/1830, †10/30/1908) married 02/17/1891 Ava Lowle Willing (2 children: William Vincent Astor (*11/15/1891, †02/03/1959) and Ava Alice Muriel 1902-1956) divorce 1909; married 09/09/1911 Madeleine Talmadge Force (*06/19/1893 Brooklyn, †03/27/1940 Palm Beach, FL) son: John Jacob Astor VI (1912-1992).

[37] **Mary Van Alen Thompson** (†05/09/1959)

[38] **Katherine Talmadge Force** (†08/13/1939) mother of Madeleine Talmadge Astor Dick (1893-1940) – Katherine is also the name of Madeleine's sister

[39] **Madeleine Talmadge Dick** (*06/19/1893 Brooklyn, †03/27/1940 Palm Beach FL, daughter of *William Hurlbut Force, head of forwarding firm* W. H. Force & Co. at 78 Front Street and of Katherine Arville Talmadge) married 09/09/1911 in Beechport Mansions, Newport, RI to John Jacob Astor IV. (1864-1912) son: John Jacob Astor VI (*08/14/1912, †06/26/1992); second marriage 06/22/1918 in Bar Harbor, ME to William K. Dick (*05/28/1888 Brooklyn, †09/15/1953 Islip LI), with whom she has 2 sons: William Force Dick and John Henry Dick; 06/21/1933 divorce in Reno, Nevada; third marriage 04/27/1933 to Enzo Fiermonte, divorce 06/11/1938. (married 1916 Dick, NYT 9/6/1953)

[40] **Sue Astor** (†02/15/1989)

[41] **Buddy Astor** (†02/17/1992)

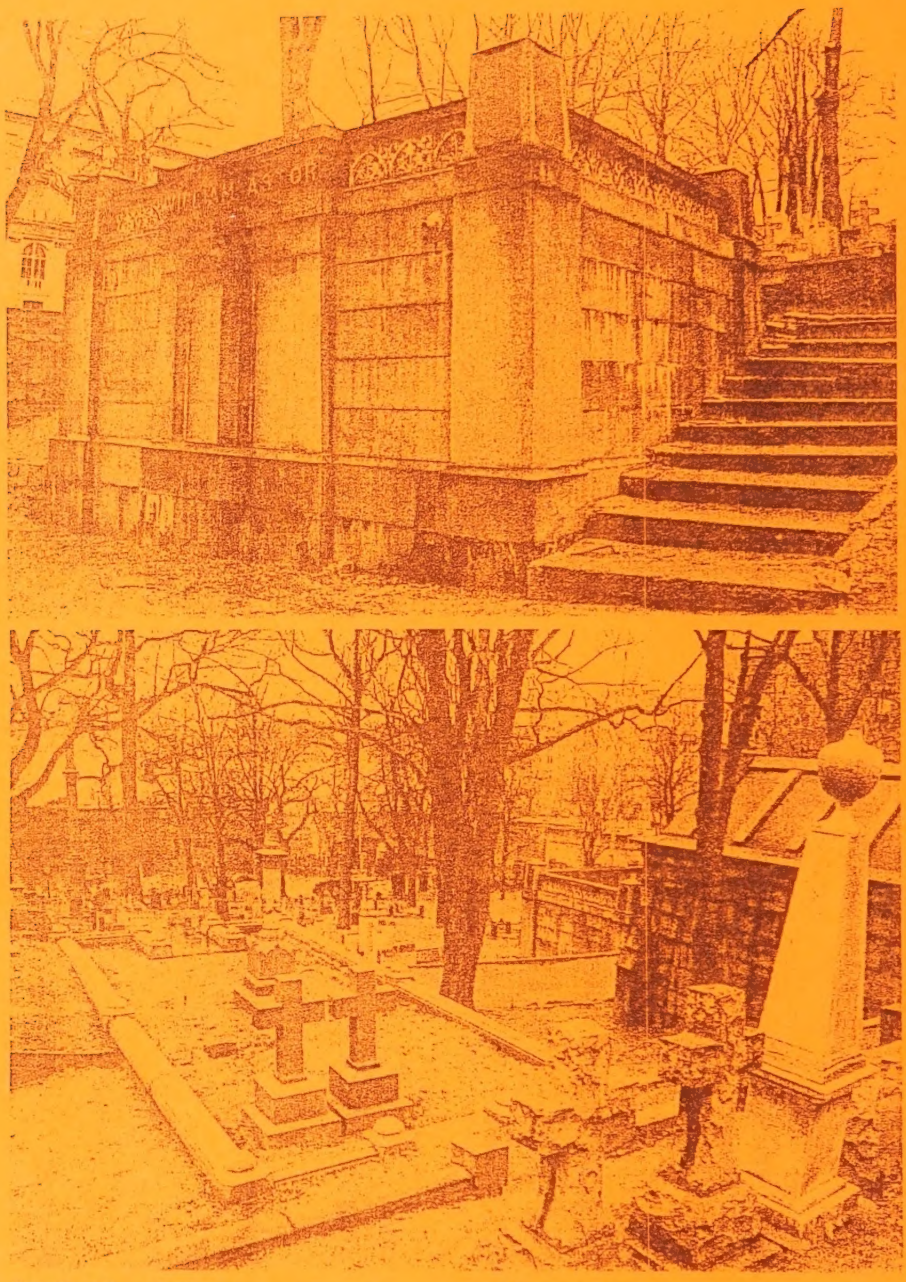
[42] Should be **John Jacob Astor VI.** (*08/14/1912, †06/26/1992 in Miami Beach, FL), son of John Jacob Astor IV. (1864-1912) and Madeleine Talmadge Force (06/19/1893-1940); married 1934 Ellen Tuck French (son: William Backhouse Astor III *07/19/1935), divorce 1943; married 1944 Getrude Gretsch (daughter Mary Jaqueline Astor Drexel *1947), divorce 1954; married 1954 Sue Sanford)

Members of the British Astor-Family with name John Jacob:

John Jacob Astor V. (05/20/1886-07/19/1971), Baron Astor of Hever, son of William Waldorf Astor (1848-1919) and Mary Dahlgreen Paul (1858-1894)

John Jacob Astor VII. (08/29/1918-09/10/2000) son of Waldorf Astor (1879-1952) and grandson of William Waldorf Astor (1848-1919)

John Jacob Astor VIII. (*06/16/1946) son of Gavin Astor (1918-1984) and grandson of John Jacob Astor V. (1886-1971)



Trinity Church Cemetery at Broadway and 153rd Street with WilliamAstor-Vault and plot with several graves purchased by John Jacob Astor III in 1867